JAN 1 8 1946

THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXXI. No. 776. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1946 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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THE AMBER LIGHT

Zones of influence under the control of the Big Three are facts, but if the United Nations Organisation is not to be still-born, they must not be exclusive zones. The Moscow decisions recognise this, and so give us reason to hope that international affairs in 1946 will at least be better than they were in 1945. Britain, whose zone was under discussion at the Conference, played a smaller but independent part in Moscow. The Bigger Two made concessions to each other. Moscow, with special influence in Eastern Europe, agrees to an Allied Commission taking a hand in broadening the Government of Rumania, and promises herself to advise the Bulgarian Government to include two members of the Opposition. The change will not be as great as many people imagine, since the Opposition parties already work openly in both countries; in Sofia four Opposition papers which freely criticise the Fatherland Front are published each day. But the decision is sensible; it recognises the rights of minorities and also the right of others to have a say in the Russian zone.

Similarly, in the Far East, which the United States has treated as her private monopoly, all the Pacific Powers are now to be allowed to sit on a Commission in Washington, while an Allied Council, which includes a Russian, a Chinese and a British Empire representative, is to have its seat in Tokio. Since America has already laid down the lines of policy during four months of exclusive occupation, American ascendancy is not likely to be seriously challenged. General MacArthur's outburst denouncing the proposal even before Mr. Byrnes had explained it, but condescendingly agreeing to try to make it work, must presumably be regarded mainly as an expression of personal arrogance. The Japanese Emperor has renounced his divinity; General MacArthur has so far refrained from claiming it. If the Commission in Washington is at sixes and sevens, the complex terms of the agreement seem to give a free hand to the Supreme Commander; if it does reach agreement on new lines of policy, General MacArthur (or his successor) should be proud to serve the first successfully functioning United Nations' organisation.

On the same principle of joint interest and responsibility, the Conference reached an agreement about Korea, which is welcomed by everyone except, apparently, some of the people of Korea. Korea, now divided into Russian and American zones, is promised independence within five years; until then it is to be governed by what amounts to a collective trusteeship. This agreement involves concessions on all sides. The British objected at San Francisco to the use of the word "independence," as a promise to backward or colonial peoples, while, at the Foreign Ministers' Conference in London, the Russians would have nothing to do with collective trusteeship. If, however, the Soviet Union wishes again to call American or British bluff, as she did so effectively by suggesting a Russian trusteeship in Tripolitania, she can now suggest a period of collective trusteeship as a solution of many thorny problems in the British, American, Russian, French and Dutch Empires.

These agreements undoubtedly ease the tense situation in the Far East. It is something that America and Russia are both above all anxious to avoid conflict. They agree in wanting a unified China with the Chungking Government remodelled. Chiang Kai-shek is driving a hard bargain with the Communists who, even without Soviet support, are preparing to defend Jehol. Of course, the Soviet Union can never be "disinterested" in the Far East, where she has an immense sea and land frontier and a far more direct interest than the United States. Nor do we think that America intends to withdraw from China. On the contrary, America has clearly come to stay, and intends to take Britain's place in the Yangtse Valley. The agreement only means that the Big Two are anxious to reach a *modus vivendi*.

At one time at Moscow, it looked as if Russia would be willing to apply the principle of joint responsibility to Persia. Late in the Conference, however, Mr. Molotov rejected Mr. Bevin's proposal of a fact-finding commission. Here Soviet policy seems to be dictated by fear that the British, who have what seems to them an unaccountably large and fully equipped army in the Middle East, offer some threat to the Caucasian oil-fields. In days, however, of aeroplanes and atomic bombs, Stalin's preoccupation with an extra strip of territory seems curiously old-fashioned. The Middle East is now the most dangerous part of the world; all the Powers are angling for position. Palestine is in ferment. Egypt wants the speedy evacuation of British troops; the Lebanon and Syria hope, without confidence, that the Anglo-French agreement means the total withdrawal of occupying forces; the Persian Government, among the worst in the world, is open to pressure from all sides. What is wanted is the rapid reduction of occupying armies and a United Nations' economic organisation to raise the standard of living throughout the Middle East.

For the rest, it is important that Russia agreed to serve on the UNO Commission, which deals with the future of atomic energy, and that the question of procedure for settling the peace treaties has been cleared up. The victorious Powers must necessarily have the prior voice in the Peace settlement, as distinct from the job of maintaining the peace after the treaties are made. A wise concession has been made in agreeing that the treaties made by the Powers particularly concerned shall be submitted to all the nations which played a serious part in obtaining victory. It is not clear whether the twenty-one Powers to whom the treaties are to be submitted have the right to modify or only to ratify the agreements of the Big Three. Unfortunately, there is at present no agreement on the future of Germany, which is shelved in view of French susceptibilities. Mr. Bevin may have had this problem, as well as Persia in the Middle East, in mind when he talked about the difficulties of peace-making.

Until these difficulties are resolved, and in particular the dangerous tension in the Middle East is eased, the road ahead of UNO can hardly be described as clear. But at least the deadlock which followed the Foreign Ministers' London Conference is broken; the Assembly, when it meets next Thursday, will not be held up by overt disagreement between the Big Three. The light is amber.

The Dutch Proposals

Dr. van Mook and the Dutch Premier, Professor Schmerhorn, have spent a day discussing the affairs of Indonesia with the Prime Minister and Mr. Noel Baker. In his subsequent broadcast, Professor Schmerhorn assured the people of Holland that his Government is working along legal lines and that no important decisions will be made without the consent of the Dutch States-General. He added that force would be used if necessary—a remark which is underlined by further despatches of Dutch troops to Indonesia. The Dutch Premier has also talked with the Queen who, we may be sure, had sensible suggestions to put forward. But no discussion will be of avail if the Dutch proposals which Dr. van Mook is taking to Indonesia with the approval of the British Government go no further than those made on November 6th. Proposals which are not based on the right of self-determination of the Indonesians cannot meet the new dynamic situation in South-East Asia. The Indonesians are unlikely, for instance, to be satisfied if van Mook's proposal is that the Government should remain in the hands of a Governor-General appointed from Amsterdam, aided by an Executive Council in which such key posts as Finance, Foreign Trade and War are still held by the Dutch. A mere numerical majority of Indonesians on the Council would not compensate for the substance of real control. We should have felt happier if one of the Indonesian leaders had been to Chequers.

The Russian Zone

Russian policy in Eastern Germany has been given high marks by the first group of correspondents who, within the limits of an arranged itinerary, were permitted freedom of inquiry into conditions in the Soviet Zone. Workers are finding that life under Soviet rule is tolerable, that they are being given increasing responsibility for managing their own affairs, and that living standards, though seriously reduced, are above starvation level. The revival of the coal industry has actually brought production almost up to the pre-war level and has made it possible for the Russians to permit a small domestic ration of coal. German industry, though stripped on a large-scale for reparations, is not crippled, and production for civilian needs has been encouraged. Russian Military Government is allowing the German provincial Governments a great measure of autonomy. These provincial administrations are responsible for the direction of the planned economy now functioning throughout the Zone. They also have carried out the long-overdue redistribution of the Junkers' estates, more than a quarter of a million peasants receiving gifts of twelve to twenty acres in addition to livestock and tools. This reform, together with the purge of Nazi officials and business men, and the association of industrial workers in management, is virtually eliminating the social class in which Nazism had struck its hardiest roots. Doubtless, this liquidation has been ruthless, but it is at least more logical than British policy which, though more humanitarian, has left Nazis in authority.

German Trade Unions

It is also clear from the correspondents' reports that the Trade Unions in the Soviet Zone have been organised as a vertical association divided into a number of specialised departments. This demand for a single union is also widespread in the British Zone. Accustomed, however, to the complexity of British Trade Unionism, Mr. Lawther and the other T.U.C. delegates have reported against it. The Germans do not want a series of autonomous unions, united for purposes of negotiation into a loose federation; they prefer a centralised executive which could control the whole Trade Union movement. And, judging by the results of such Trade-Union elections as have been held so far, most of the rank and file support this view, as the T.U.C. delegation concedes. Mr. Lawther and his colleagues agree that this plan looks pretty on paper, but it runs so contrary to their whole experience—and to their view of German politics at present—that the danger that power may be concentrated in the hands of a few men bulks larger in their eyes than the advantages of the proposal. This demand for a single union is the first sign of any widespread democratic initiative in post-Hitler Germany. Obviously, the T.U.C. recommendation—now endorsed by the General Council—will carry considerable weight, but it might be unwise for the Control Commission to veto any further movement towards a single union. In the end, German trade unionists will have to direct their own affairs, and they will not do so effectively if they have to operate a Trade Union structure imposed against their wishes, especially if the situation is complicated by wide divergences in structure in the separate Zones.

Italia Infelix

Though New Year's Day witnessed resumption by the Italian Government of administrative control of the northern provinces, the Italian people greeted 1946 with little enthusiasm or confidence. Apart from general disappointment that the Moscow Conference should seemingly have taken no account of the merits of "co-belligerency," anxiety is growing not merely with regard to Italy's future frontiers but, as Signor Nenni declares in *Avanti*, in relation to "our daily bread, our very freedom." With prices soaring and a drastic devaluation of the lira regarded as inevitable, the economic picture is gloomy and the political outlook obscure. At the national Congress of the Communist Party, held last week, Signor Togliatti, who announced a membership figure of 1,800,000, outlined a programme of studiously moderate social reconstruction based on the collectivisation of agriculture and the reorganisation of industry on the principle of low production costs. In emphasising the dangers of armed counter-revolution from the Right, he joined with Signor Nenni in complaining that AMG had everywhere obstructed the purge of Fascists which the Committee of National Liberation had vainly tried to carry out. Though he said nothing specifically of fusion between the Socialist and Communist parties, his implication clearly was that working-class unity in Italy was essential; and it is significant that Signor Nenni followed him on the rostrum to deliver the Socialist party's fraternal greetings. Signor Nenni, who is shortly visiting London with Signor Silone, is evidently alive to the possibility of his party splitting, and of a large fraction of its membership in the north joining the Communists. Meanwhile, the Vatican—its Black International widened by the wholesale creation of non-Italian cardinals—is steadily drawing the Catholic Centre away from the Left. The "Christian Left" party has been dissolved; its adherents, according to Vatican radio, "became aware of the inconsistency of Catholic and Communist tendencies." The Society of Jesus, which controls that radio, was never short of a neat phrase.

France's Economic Plan

France's devaluation of the franc and entry into the Bretton Woods scheme have been accompanied by the announcement of a far-reaching plan of investigation into the conditions and needs of French industry. The plan has something in common with our "working parties"; but M. Monnet's investigating committees are to report direct to a Planning Council and are not to be subject to any one department. They will not have an easy task; French industrial equipment is—and was even in 1939—largely obsolete or at least obsolescent; and there is certain to be strong resistance to anything that savours of nationalisation at the expense of the small man. It is, indeed, not easy to believe that any system that failed to give some scope for small, highly personal, forms of enterprise could work in France; but it is no less hard to see how enterprise of this type is to be quickly re-equipped and enabled to produce at reasonable cost without the aid of a strong central mechanism of control. Can France, politically divided and economically most uncertain which way she means to go, provide this central driving force? Clearly, one indispensable thing is a loan from the U.S.A. for the purchase of capital equipment; and it may be assumed that entry into the Bretton Woods scheme was regarded as the prerequisite for such a loan.

The French Devaluation

Entry into the Bretton Woods scheme involved fixing the external value of the franc; and probably the chosen rate of 480 to the £ is as good a guess as could have been made at the present stage of French recovery. The old rate bore no relation to realities, and was plainly inconsistent with any revival of French export trade; whereas the new rate should put French exports on a competitive basis in the near future, unless costs rise sharply in the meantime. To say this, however, is to bring out the uncertainty of the entire situation. There is at present no such thing in France as a level of prices, because of the black market; and as long as this market exists there will be strong pressure to increase wages and salaries in relation to the prices prevailing in it. To do this would soon upset the new value of the franc; but the black market can be liquidated only by a rise in production. It will therefore be a race between the pressure to raise wages and salaries and the campaign to improve industrial efficiency. The French situation illustrates the absurdity of trying at the same time to fix binding currency values in a world which has not at all settled down, and to impose binding prohibitions on the steps which countries are to be allowed to take in order to maintain these values. In this respect we are placed even less advantageously than the French; but we can at least console ourselves that Britain will not be the only country with reason to point out to the American masters of world finance the practical obstacles to having everything both ways.

The Price of Steel

The rise in steel prices announced this week will put the cost of many classes of steel goods still more above the comparable American prices than they have been hitherto. Fortunately, this does not apply to the sheet steel used in motor-car manufacture, as in this case the price is being reduced in consequence of cheaper "strip-mill" production. For other steel products, the price increase may seem moderate if it is considered in relation to pre-war prices and to the advances in the cost of fuel; but is such a basis of comparison to be accepted as reasonable? Pre-war prices were dictated by a close combine, which was generally accused of setting them at a monopolistic level, made possible by the strict control of imports under the international cartel arrangement. It was clear before 1939 that British steel prices were too high to give the exporting branches of the metal trades a fair chance in the world market; and one of the main reasons for the Labour Party's decision to nationalise the steel industry was that it was using its monopoly to exploit the public and protect inefficient producers. No doubt, pig iron prices, which have been kept down under the control, had to be allowed to rise; and no doubt it is desirable to bring the prices of different classes of iron and steel and manufactures thereof into a more rational relation than has existed under the controls. But no sensible person will be satisfied until all steel prices fall as a result of more efficient methods and the cessation of arrangements for bolstering up high-cost producers.

THE YOUNG DOCTORS' DILEMMA

MR. ANEURIN BEVAN stated recently that it would be incompatible with the provision of an efficient National Health Service that the future exchange of medical practices and the creation of new practices within that Service should be left entirely unregulated. In less parliamentary language this meant that the purchase and sale of practices is to be stopped. With this intention few people (it might have been thought), even in the ranks of the medical profession, would be inclined to quarrel. Traffic in practices drawing most of their income from public funds under a National Health scheme would be on all counts indefensible. But, apart from that consideration, the sale of practices is in any case an anomaly and a scandal. It is an anomaly because it has no basis in legal property right; any doctor may "squat" where he pleases, instead of buying a practice—if he can afford to wait, and prefers to expend his capital in waiting instead of buying a clientele ready-made. It is a scandal because it makes the possession of capital rather than skill the master-key to medical success.

Naturally, if practices are to cease to have a sale value, there must be compensation; and Mr. Bevan has given an assurance that this will be provided in proper measure. Even with this assurance, however, his announcement has evoked a counter-attack from some elements in the medical profession. The Negotiating Committee, which represents an impressive list of professional bodies and claims to speak on behalf of all medical men and women in this country, has promulgated a "Bill of Rights." It makes its co-operation with the Government in the establishment of a National Health Service dependent on the Government's acceptance of seven principles :—

(1) In the public interest, the medical profession must not have imposed on it any form of service which lends itself, directly or indirectly, to the profession as a whole becoming full-time salaried servants of the State or the Local Authorities.

(2) The profession should remain free to exercise the art and science of medicine according to its traditions, standards and knowledge, the individual doctor retaining full responsibility for the care of the patient, and freedom of judgment, action, speech, and publication, without interference, in his professional work.

(3) The citizen should be free to change his or her family doctor, to select the hospital at which he or she should be treated, and to decide whether to have recourse to public medical service or to obtain private medical attention.

(4) Doctors should be free to choose the form and place of work they desire without Governmental or other direction.

(5) Every registered medical practitioner should be entitled as of right to participate in public medical service.

(6) Hospital services should be planned over "natural" hospital areas, centred on the universities.

(7) Doctors should be adequately represented on all administrative bodies associated with the proposed National Health Service.

To certain of these comprehensive principles no serious exception need be taken. We appreciate fully, for example, the anxiety of doctors that research and specialisation should not be cramped by the subordination of the most highly skilled practitioners to an administrative machine which might not be free from the defects of bureaucracy. But, taken as a whole, the Negotiating Committee's conditions are a gratuitous challenge to Mr. Bevan; and, in our judgment, they will not be endorsed by the younger, more progressively minded doctors themselves. They will not desire, in their private interests, to oppose the Minister in making Public Medical Service attractive from the standpoint of salaries and conditions; nor would they wish the public to forgo Health Centres equipped with the finest modern equipment. They know that Mr. Bevan must ensure that the facilities publicly provided represent medical care of a scope and character which millions have so far been denied.

For, behind the fine principles of the "Bill of Rights," there lies the fact that we have at present, as a nation, a most inefficient medical service. The true "family doctor" was the salt of the earth—friend and confidant, and never-failing help in time of need. But he was never available to the bulk of the community. While we know of superb examples of personal service and first-rate clinics in working-class districts, the average general practitioner today is a harrassed man, with too big a panel, with surgery hours often a perfunctory ritual, and with little leisure to keep abreast of modern developments or modern methods. Living on the intellectual capital he acquired years ago as a student or interne, he is on call 24 hours a day and is economically dependent on fees determined by the mere number of his patients. Even before the war, there were 19 million insured patients. Under a comprehensive Health Service that number will be more than doubled, so that, on the old basis, the "G.P." would act as family doctor to 3,000 patients. Unless, that is, he imported assistants; in that case his patients, having selected him by that illusory process of "free choice" which the Negotiating Committee champions, would have to put up willy-nilly with the auxiliary and, to all intents and purposes, anonymous attention of his "curates".

The chief cause of this is the existing maldistribution of doctors. A few lush, fee-paying, well-to-do districts are notoriously over-doctored. Areas grossly under-doctored, with resulting overswollen practices, are those in which the population is poor and thinly scattered or in which (as in the case of congested industrial centres) fee-paying patients are overwhelmingly outnumbered by the insured. A better distribution of doctors over the country is urgently needed; and, in addition, the total numbers of trained medical personnel require to be greatly augmented. Every class of society should be drawn upon for recruits to the medical profession; and since the need for capital at the end of a long and expensive training has been a big factor in inhibiting the poor boy or girl from becoming a doctor, a prerequisite of an adequate National Health Service is that medicine should be a career open to all who have skill. This consideration alone would be sufficient to justify Mr. Bevan in putting an end to commercial traffic in practices.

In view of the attitude of the Negotiating Committee it is difficult to estimate how long it will be before the Minister of Health will be in a position to place before Parliament his completed scheme. Apart from stopping the sale of practices, he has to face a number of difficult problems. Since some redistribution of medical personnel is essential, he will have to decide—short of the (improbable) imposition of pure "direction"—what sort of inducement he can offer to attract doctors into the under-doctored areas.

In the meanwhile, however, a situation is arising in which the Minister might do well to take interim remedial steps. While most areas are short of doctors, and in the event of a bad epidemic of influenza the shortage might have serious results, more and more doctors are being released by the Services into temporary unemployment. They are, in fact, in a quandary. Shall they buy a practice, gambling on getting back its price from the State in compensation? Or shall they wait for Mr. Bevan's New Deal? One method of avoiding the present waste of medical man-power would be, we suggest, for Mr. Bevan to extend the Emergency Medical Service, and create a Medical Reserve—a pool of doctors to be held against the day of the salaried service. On demobilisation, doctors might be invited to join this Reserve in a civilian status, but with emoluments equivalent to those of their last rank in the Services. In return, they would have to accept an obligation to take temporary posts as assistants to overworked general practitioners or appointments in hospitals. Opportunities might also be given them to take refresher courses to equip them for their duties in a salaried State service later on. An improvised scheme of this nature might be opposed by the watchful Negotiating Committee as the thin end of a wedge driven into professional "freedom"; but it would be of real public advantage under present circumstances, and it would be most acceptable to many young doctors who now find themselves faced with an awkward dilemma.

REFLECTIONS IN RECESS

INESCAPABLY one is reminded of the end of a school term. That first day at home was always a moment of violent adjustment. The family asked questions to which there could only be formal answers. For the values of school—its ceremonies and language, its personal relations, ambitions and tensions, its pleasures and its pains—belonged to a different world, set apart from the slow continuity of home. The schoolboy accepts a split personality in order to achieve integrity in both places.

There is a strangely similar hiatus between Westminster and the constituency. The devoted local party has saved and stinted to send its standard-bearer to the House. Last July came the glorious news of success, the celebrations, the leave taking, the good resolutions. How far away now seems the debate on the Loyal Address, when the new members were still successful *candidates*, with a single loyalty to their constituencies, determined not to be changed by Westminster but to change it. Now, in this Christmas recess, they go back to their constituencies as initiates, aware that they—like generations before them—have surrendered to the potent tradition, become absorbed into that close and closed community over which Mr. Speaker presides; and begun the double life, from which no-one, whatever he may say, retires willingly. For twelve weeks they have lived in the Chamber, the lobbies, the tea-room and the library, emerging only to sleep for a few hours. and read *Hansard* over breakfast before they hurry back to a morning Committee. Now they must answer questions in their constituencies, knowing perfectly well that the essence of their experience is incommunicable to the outside world.

Seen in perspective, this absorption of some two hundred and fifty Socialists into the traditional life of Westminster is the most important single development of this sitting. The House, elected last July, was so new and so different from any of its predecessors that it might have brought about at the very least a "New Deal" in parliamentary government. The huge Labour majority reflected a new mood in the electorate, a refusal of confidence to the ruling class, a determination in favour of *self-government*, government by representatives who belonged personally to their supporters, who could be called quite naturally by their christian names. This was, for the first time, a people's Parliament elected by the people, for the people of the people. Would this new wine burst the old bottle?

We know the answer now. The crowds in the central lobby and the Member's letter-bag prove that the Parliamentary Labour Party is in closer touch with the people than any previous Government Party. The backbencher's job is not merely to vote for the Government but to be the point of personal contact between a Socialist Cabinet and the people which it serves. This by itself is a whole time job, vital to Socialist Democracy. The Cabinet lays down the policy and administers through a vast and growing

bureaucracy: the backbencher represents the individual, for whose sake the Socialist Law is passed, but on whom, time after time, the law and its administration imposes a hardship or injustice, which can only be remedied by Ministerial intervention. The more Socialism we get, the more we shall need a throng of active, sympathetic backbenchers, representatives of the individual against the bureaucratic machine.

The greatest achievement of the Parliamentary Labour Party is that it has settled down to do this job. Instead of trying to govern the Government, it has accepted the dual responsibility of keeping the Government in touch with the people, and of defending the people against the inequities of bureaucracy. The Labour Whips have never had an easier time: there have been no revolts, or caucuses or Left-wing cliques, such as were confidently predicted last July. Indeed, self-discipline and commonsense acceptance of leadership have been so widespread that the Party is even considering the abolition of disciplinary standing-orders. Partly, no doubt, this is due to the inclusion in the Government of practically everyone who could lead a "ginger-group"; partly to the impotence and inner disagreements of the Opposition; and partly to the really remarkable mastery of the House displayed by the Front Bench. But the main cause has been the Parliamentary Labour Party itself. Most of its members, returning from service overseas, know by experience what the destruction of liberty means; and are not ashamed to accept with thankfulness the traditions of Westminster, to permit themselves to be licked into Parliamentary shape, and to carry out the arduous and unspectacular duties of the Labour backbencher.

To the outside critic this may seem disappointing. What has happened, he asks, to all those brilliant newcomers whose maiden speeches marked them out for distinction? Why do we hear so little of them, in comparison with the old stagers like Dick Stokes and Sidney Silverman—not to mention independents like D. N. Pritt and W. J. Brown? Why are there not more men of personal conscience like Raymond Blackburn? The answer is fairly obvious. The Government is carrying out its programme: the speeches are made from the front-bench, and, unless the Government falls down on its job, very little will be heard from behind it. The silence of the newcomers is the tribute paid to a leadership, which, taken all in all, has surpassed expectation.

So far, indeed, this Session has seen a steady increase in Labour solidarity. Last September there was a marked tendency to barrack the weaker members of the Government from the rear. The pattern of loyalties was often across the floor of the House, uniting young Tories and Socialists against the two front benches. This tendency has disappeared, as the Tories began to realise the full implications of their defeat. At the beginning of the Session, neither side quite grasped what had happened. Labour members, who had spent their lives in Opposition, were still temperamentally "agin the Government"—even their own; Tories could not believe that power had shifted, and were inclined to support "the powers that be." But week by week, the iron has entered into the Tory soul. They, to whom office appertained by ancestral right, have been cast into the outer darkness, where a man must criticise the Government without access to the facts. Mr. Eden no longer sees the Foreign Office telegrams and cannot discuss them over dinner with his young confidants. Mr. Lyttelton is no longer in the Chancellor's confidence or hobnobbing with the President of the Board of Trade. Mr. Butler is no longer the master of our education and Mr. Hudson of our agriculture. Strangest of all, Mr. Churchill cannot send for the Chiefs of Staff at any time of the day or night. To the Tories, this is a monstrous and inexplicable stroke of fate. For them Parliament has meant primarily Office—or the promise of office. They have not needed a policy. They held power not in order to carry out a programme in which they believed, but because they were the right people to hold power.

And now, suddenly, totally unexpectedly, they have been dispossessed of their ruling status by a thankless electorate. At first, they refused to accept the idea, talked confidently of a split in the Labour Party and the return of a coalition Government, which would restore office to the right people. But, by Christmas, they had grasped the full enormity of what had happened. A Labour Government was really carrying out a Labour programme. Opposition theory was becoming the law of the land. What was worse, Socialists were showing themselves masters of parliamentary procedure and quietly taking possession of the key positions of political and economic power. They, the traditional rulers of Britain, were out, clean out.

To the increasing self-discipline of the Parliamentary Labour Party, the increasing anarchy of the Tories has been an exact correlative. Labour, gathering self-confidence week by week, has been shedding the factiousness which arises from the impotence of Opposition. It is beginning to feel in its bones that it has a natural right—not merely a theoretical duty—to rule this country. The Tories, at last aware of their impotence and deeply resentful of it, are turning against each other. To recapture power, they must have recourse to the "theorizing" which they despise and evolve a policy which is a real alternative to the new "status quo." But what shall it be? Shall they resign themselves to Socialism and seek for key positions in the Socialist State? Then, their place is outside Parliament. Shall they oppose Socialism? Then they will never regain power by constitutional means. Shall they patiently await a crisis which calls for a National Government? Then, at the best, they enter as junior partners; at the worst, they will wait till Doomsday. Meanwhile, they blame each other, hate the usurpers and despise the electorate.

This is a dangerous mood, and the danger will grow with time. Few Tories have the perspective of Oliver Stanley or Lord Cranborne, who can go into Opposition with the confidence that, as in the past there have been periods of ill-fortune, outlived by the family, if not by the individual, so some time in the future, the wheel will turn. Such equanimity—and cynicism—is the birthright of the very few and the very elect. For most of the party, it is out of the question. They want their privileges back—and quick. No one should be surprised if, within the next five years, a wing of the Tory party begins to justify unconstitutional behaviour by an appeal to a "higher loyalty." The Curragh mood is already noticeable. To this (still small) section of Tories, Mr. Eden, as heir apparent to Mr. Churchill, seems an ineffectual architect of reaction.

PHINEAS

"FELIX AND ISABELLA"

[*The following article deals with one group of the mass of German archives now in Allied hands. Much of this material, which makes possible the contemporary dissection of history, will not be disclosed at Nuremberg. All of it should become the property of the United Nations Organisation, under whose auspices complete editions should be published.*]

WOULD Hitler have written in his Last Will that, "it is not true that I or anybody else in Germany wanted the war in 1939," had he known that the text of his secret speech to all Supreme Commanders of November 23rd, 1939, was about to fall into Allied hands, and would be revealed to the world at Nuremberg? In this he says:

> One might accuse me of wanting to fight and fight again. In struggle I see the fate of all beings. I did not organise the armed forces in order not to strike. The decision to strike was always in me. Time is working for our adversary. I shall strike and not capitulate.

The personality of Hitler emerges in its full and fearful proportions from these secret briefing addresses to his military commanders. It has often been thought that, neurotic as he was, he may possibly have believed in some of his own lies and been genuinely convinced, for instance, of a Jewish world conspiracy. But it is now clear that he never believed a word of it. When he truly speaks his mind, as in his meetings with his Service chiefs, he speaks of Britain, Russia, America, but not of Jews or Freemasons.

On whatever spot in the immense pile of documents (few of them extensively used by the prosecution, and all of vital interest to students of contemporary history) one plays the flash-light, some intriguing detail invariably shines up. One of the most interesting documents made public at Nuremberg, fortunately in its entirety, is the text of a lecture given by Jodl, then Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, to an assembly of Gauleiters in Munich on November 7th, 1943. This assessment of "the strategic position at the beginning of the fifth year of war" shows a remarkably clear and undeluded understanding of the reasons why the war could no longer be won and why the only hope for Germany lay in dragging it out into a compromise. In it Jodl attributes the fact that "the palm of victory has eluded us" to Germany's failure to attain three specific objectives. These were: the impossibility of a landing in Britain; the failure to bring the war against Russia to a victorious conclusion during the first winter; and the failure to draw Spain into the war at some time during the first two years of fighting.

It is certainly noteworthy that the German Chief of Staff should have attached such importance to Spain, and it is even more remarkable that he should attribute Spanish resistance to Suñer, who was always regarded as Ribbentrop's lackey. "Our third objective," says Jodl, "that of drawing Spain into the war on our side and thereby creating the possibility of seizing Gibraltar, was wrecked by the resistance of the Spanish, or better, Jesuit Foreign Minister Serano Suñer." Does this mean that Franco was ready and willing to resist a German entry into Spain with what troops and arms he had? The Nuremberg documents do not make this entirely clear. But they do make clear that the Nazis had already achieved a peaceful penetration of Spain with the help of their agents, and that an operational plan existed to carry out a military campaign on Spanish soil. This plan, which in certain contingencies also envisaged the occupation of Portugal, had the code-name "Felix and Isabella." It makes a particularly interesting study in the light of the recent publication of a memorandum prepared by Mr. Sumner Welles in 1941, in which he states that Mr. Churchill informed President Roosevelt in August, 1941, of an impending highly secret operation—the occupation of the Canary Islands about September 15th, at the risk of war with Spain. Hitler's Directive No. 18, we now know, envisaged precisely the same operation, from the German side. But the date of *his* Directive is November 12th, 1940.

What happened to "Felix and Isabella"? What happened to relations between Hitler and Franco? The Nuremberg documents provide at least part of the answer. The Führer had his own ideas about the Caudillo. Already the Blomberg Directive "for all war eventualities" of June 24th, 1937, mentions under "special preparations" an operation "Case Richard," covering "war-like entanglements with Red Spain." Four months later, on November 5th, 1937, the record of a conference between Hitler and his Service chiefs (known as the Hossbach minutes), reveals Hitler as stating:

> From the German point of view a 100 per cent victory by Franco is not desirable. We are more interested in a continuation of the civil war and preservation of the tensions in the Mediterranean. Franco in sole possession of the Spanish Peninsula would mean the end of Italian intervention and of the presence of Italy on the Balearics. As our interests are directed towards continuing the war in Spain it must be the task of our future policy to strengthen Italy in her fight to hold on to the Balearics

However, a consolidation of Italian positions on the Balearics can *not* be tolerated either by France or England, and could lead to war by France and England against Italy, in which case Spain, if entirely in Franco's hands, could participate on the side of Italy's enemies.

Shadows of the non-intervention committee! Before he has even won his civil war, Franco is already to be a pawn in Hitler's game. How does he manage to get out of it? Once the Spanish war is over and Hitler's plans against Poland are nearing fruition, Franco appears in a somewhat different, although still rather dim, light. In his speech to the Commanders-in-Chief on August 22nd, 1939, Hitler goes no further than saying that "Franco is a factor favourable to us. However, we can ask only benevolent neutrality from Spain. But this depends on Franco's personality. He guarantees a certain uniformity and steadiness of the present system in Spain. But we must take into account the fact that Spain does not as yet have a Fascist party of our internal unity." In other words, Hitler doesn't trust his pupil.

Meantime, the plans for "Felix and Isabella" go forward. Hitler's War Directive No. 18, of November 12th, 1940, states that "political steps to bring about an early Spanish entry into the war have been taken. The aim of German intervention in the Iberian Peninsula will be to drive the British out of the Western Mediterranean. For this purpose, Gibraltar will be taken and the Straits closed, and the British will be prevented from gaining a foothold at another point of the Iberian Peninsula, or the Atlantic Islands." Preparation and execution of this operation envisaged the following:

> Reconnaisance troops (officers in civilian clothes) make the necessary preparations for the action against Gibraltar and for taking over aerodromes. Special units of the Foreign Intelligence Bureau are to take over the protection of the Gibraltar area, in secret co-operation with the Spaniards, against British attempts to widen the terrain in front and against premature discovery and frustration of our plans.

The units intended for this operation were to be kept in readiness away from the French-Spanish border. A warning order would be given three weeks before the troops crossed the border, "but only after the conclusion of the preparations regarding the Atlantic Islands." Luftwaffe units, directed by observation from Algeciras, were to carry out an air attack from French soil against the British fleet at Gibraltar, and were to force a landing on Spanish aerodromes after the attack. Shortly after this, troops were to cross the border by land and air, Gibraltar was to be attacked by German troops, and other units were to march straight in to Portugal should the British gain a foothold there. Spanish military assistance was envisaged only in connection with the closing of the Straits.

The Directive concludes with Hitler's instructions.

> As a result of the Gibraltar operation, the Canaries and Cap Verde Islands will gain increased importance for the British conduct of the war at sea, as well as for our own. The Commanders-in-Chief of Navy and Air Force are to examine how the Spanish defence of the Canaries can be supported and how the Cap Verde Islands can be occupied. The question of an occupation of Madeira and the Azores is also to be examined, and the advantages and disadvantages that would arise from this.

This is where Mr. Sumner Welles' memorandum comes in. But where did Franco get out? Did Hitler refrain from his action for reasons similar to those that made Mr. Churchill drop his plan? Did the disadvantages outweigh the advantages? Would Franco and Salazar have fought, and how much of a serious nuisance would they have been? The full documents, and in particular the minutes of the interviews between Hitler, Ribbentrop, and Suñer, when they come to light, will tell us that. In Hitler's military plans, operation "Felix and Isabella" recedes into the background in the following months. Other operations, such as "Attila" (the seizure of French North Africa) are planned and dropped again. By February 3rd, 1941, the date of Hitler's operational conference with his Service chiefs on "Case Barbarossa" (Russia), the Chief of the Army General Staff points out that in view of the impending operation in the East, "Attila" can be carried out only under difficulties, and "Sea-Lion" (Invasion of Britain) can no longer be carried out. "Felix" is now no longer possible as the main part of the artillery is being entrained.

That was the last that was heard of "Felix and Isabella." General Jodl makes the funeral oration on this phase of the war, when he says in his Munich lecture:

> Spain and Portugal have decided to remain neutral. They have not the necessary strength to defend themselves against England and America. Everything depends therefore on the goodwill of our Western opponents as to the measure in which they recognise this neutrality. Latest events in Portugal have shown this. I do not believe however, that it is in the interest of the Anglo-Saxons, either for political or military reasons, to unleash war on the Iberian Peninsula, and that is undoubtedly what would happen were Spain to be attacked. Whether simpler methods of political disintegration, which are at present being employed, will be successful, is doubtful, at all events in the case of Spain.

The clearest moral from all this evidence is that those who said that Germany's war against the world began in Spain in 1936 were right.

PETER DE MENDELSSOHN

A LONDON DIARY

DEMOCRATS, apparently believing that virtue is its own reward, used to object to "Honours." It was a mistake, because people do in fact crave for some recognition of their services, and if you deny them ribbons and furbelows, they make money the sole test of success. While America prides itself on equality and millionaires, a Socialist State achieving equality must confer distinctions for outstanding work. On the whole the New Year's Honours List conforms pretty well to the principle of rewarding service. Apart from some Honours that must have been awarded by the Coalition Government or directly by Buckingham Palace, the choice has fallen rightly on people who have rendered conspicuous service during the war. It would be invidious and silly to pick and choose amongst the names, but I can't help noticing with particular pleasure the inclusion of Edith Evans, Stanley Unwin, Carr-Saunders, Appleton, Zuckerman and other scientists, including two anti-Nazi Germans. I was also glad to see the name of Francis Meynell, who would certainly have taken a heavy bet twenty years ago, during the *Daily Herald* and Russian gold affair, that he would never have a handle to his name. I had hoped to see H. G. Wells among the list of O.M.'s, and I hope that his republican views have not excluded him. Naturally one thinks of many people who have done important work for the public and who have not received recognition. I can think of temporary Civil Servants whose names few people know, but who (I think) ought to have been on the list; and if we are really looking for those who cheered us up in one way or another during the war, why not people from the wider fields of education and culture? Why shouldn't Priestley's broadcasts in 1940 or Joad's services on the Brains Trust be recognised, at least, by the O.B.E.?

* * *

Argument about the American Loan, as far as this country is concerned, is now over, at least for the time. But in the United States, bitter feelings about Britain continue to be expressed. Official circles of Washington, of course, understand the British case. It was American politics and lack of political leadership that prevented a happier outcome. I am told that the three days' exposition of Britain's post-war position given by Lord Keynes to a group of American experts was the most masterly and persuasive thing of its kind ever done. No one can so combine technical mastery with an appeal to moral and common sense. At the end of it Mr. Clayton made a statement which showed that he knew that it was in the interests of America as well as Britain to make the loan five billion dollars and only to charge nominal interest. Economically, I repeat, as well as psychologically in America's interest. Then up rose Senator George, threatening to lead a Southern revolt against this British attempt to outsmart America. Back came the American negotiators; the loan had to be much smaller, and at 2 per cent. If there had been a strong political leader in the United States, Senator George would not have mattered. Once again one recognises the tragedy of Mr. Roosevelt's death. We in this country have to remember that the American public still cannot face the fact that Britain stood alone for a year in the war and lost absolutely more men than the United States with three times the population; that most Americans are not economically educated and think in simple terms of money, not of realities; they believe they were generous to wipe out Lease-Lend, and that it must always be generous to lend money to anyone at 2 per cent.

* * *

The Nazis are not the only "unofficial" political party now influencing the attitude of Germans. Another group centres round the survivors of the unsuccessful putsch of July 20th, 1944; it includes many who pretend to have played a part in the putsch, and it creates much uneasiness among real anti-Nazis because its air of respectability often commends it to Military Government. After a stormy meeting of one of the Berlin borough councils, for instance, the Allied-appointed mayor threw up his hands indignantly and shouted "Gentlemen, believe me, it is not my fault that the 20th July failed to come off." The ramifications of the 1944 putsch have never yet been fully explored. It certainly included some genuine anti-Nazis like the trade unionist Leuschner, but these were greatly outnumbered by Nazis, generals and members of the Prussian and Bavarian aristocracy. On the other hand, Himmler in his panic shot a number of people who were not connected with the plot. There has recently been a systematic campaign to whitewash the 20th July conspirators; laudatory articles have appeared in the Allied-sponsored press, including that under Soviet censorship. It received additional impetus when General Lahousen (of the Secret Service) delivered at Nuremberg long eulogies of his former chief, Admiral Canaris, one of Germany's most sinister figures. A pamphlet on the "true background of 20th July," designed towards the same end, was even distributed in the court house. The whole story of this putsch of opportunists who, in the words of Helldorf, "tried to jump off the train before it derailed," is worth full investigation.

* * *

I have in front of me a copy of a letter written by Oberpräsident Dr. Amelnuxen, head of the Provincial Government of Westphalia. It is a reply to a German named Wellenseick, an active anti-Nazi who was wounded while fighting against Hitler. In applying for a post in the British zone he mentioned the facts about his anti-Nazi record in the belief that they would be regarded as a qualification, a proof of his political reliability to work in a Germany from which the Allies have sworn to root out Nazism. Here is a translation of the letter he received in reply from the Oberpräsident:

> According to your statement you went over to the Czech-Russian partisans in the former Protectorate at the beginning of 1945, that is to say before the capitulation you fought with weapons as a German against German troops. Your employment in German public service is therefore obviously completely out of the question.

Obviously.

* * *

There they were again; those rows upon rows of children with Sir Malcolm Sargent as the Fairy Godmother introducing them to the splendid

mystery of *The Messiah*. "How much music Handel could write for one short sentence, even for half a sentence," said Sir Malcolm. He delighted his audience (as he did for so many years when the Robert Mayer Concerts for Children were held at the Central Hall), talking simply and intimately about the music, about the composer or the words of the Oratorio. Monday's revival of these concerts was at the Albert Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Sir Malcolm Sargent recalled that at the first performance of *The Messiah* in the Dublin Rotunda in 1742, Handel himself played and conducted before an audience of seven hundred; the hall was packed, and ladies were asked "not to come with hoops," and gentlemen to "come without their swords." The children sat enthralled, motionless, except here and there where a boy or girl beat time with the conductor. Do people realise how great a service Sir Robert and Lady Mayer have rendered to this country? Thousands of children, who listened to the concerts they organised between 1922 and 1939, afterwards became part of the daily crowds at the National Gallery concerts during the war. As I left the Hall a group of children collected programmes of other concerts from the rack; "We want to hear more like this," one of them said.

* * *

The issue of the *Political Quarterly*, published next week, is devoted to a discussion of the world position of Britain after the war. Writers whose names will be familiar to readers of this paper discuss Britain's relations with America, Russia and Europe. The *Political Quarterly* indeed represents the same school of thought as this journal; that is to say, while its analysis owes much to Marxism, its conclusions and its values are in the liberal tradition of British Socialism. There also reappears an issue of the Marxist *Modern Quarterly*, with articles by Professor Bernal, J. B. S. Haldane, Norman MacKenzie and others, who discuss current problems with great erudition. The first article, by Haldane, is brilliant and provocative. I did not find all the articles equally readable, but the *Modern Quarterly*, which appears to have room for other than strictly Communist contributors, makes a welcome reappearance, a journal with its own niche to fill. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to J. F. Hobson.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

I remember the case of a man who had gone into the Serpentine to rescue a dog that had fallen through the ice. In the sequel he was prosecuted for bathing outside prohibited hours.—Letter to *Daily Telegraph*.

Mr. Ching thinks Colin is a genius. Apart from technical skill, he says, the boy shows remarkable musical maturity. A musician who went to hear Colin wept for half an hour while the boy played.—*Evening Standard*.

To prevent housewives from lighting fires with newspapers, Barrow-in-Furness Corporation salvage committee have asked the Ministry of Supply to have all newsprint rendered non-inflammable.—*News Chronicle*.

A spinster should not receive the same salary as a bachelor, because the latter was likely to incur considerable pre-marital responsibilities.—From the speech of the President of the National Association of Schoolmasters as reported in the *Manchester Guardian*.

Powerful personality, clear voice and imposing stature made her the perfect Queen of the Fairies. —*Aberdeen Evening Express*.

SARAWAK—TEST CASE

AMID the welter of political problems which are now emerging from the conflict in the Far East there is one of rather peculiar interest. This is the problem of Sarawak—a relatively small coastal strip of Borneo. It has a very mixed native population, which includes Malays and Chinese as well as a remarkable variety of jungle-living peoples such as the Land Dyaks, Ibans, Kayans, and Punans. Legally, Sarawak is an independent State under the protection of Great Britain. There is no dispute about this. After James Brooke had been elected Rajah by the people of Sarawak in 1841 he actually approached the British Government with the suggestion that the small country should be taken over by the Crown. But the British Government refused to take on this responsibility. Sarawak was later officially recognised as an independent State, by America in 1850, and by His Majesty's Government in 1864. By an agreement in 1888, it was provided that the country should continue as an independent State under the protection of Great Britain, and that His Majesty's Government, while specifically undertaking not to interfere in any way with the internal administration of the State, should assume control of Sarawak's foreign relations and be responsible for its defence.

Meanwhile, in spite of inherent difficulties presented by its heterogeneous mixture of races and religions, and apart from an abortive attempt by a Chinese Secret Society to assume control of the country in 1857, Sarawak has continued happy and contented under its administration for a hundred years. During this time the country has been administered by a handful of Europeans in complete co-operation with representatives of the various native communities, inspired by the tradition of tolerance and order which had been initiated by Sir James Brooke in 1841. In 1941, centenary celebrations were held in Sarawak. One of the major features of this centenary was the enactment of a Constitution Order which formulated and codified what in fact had been the administrative procedure for many years. By this Order, all legislative power and authority in Sarawak were definitely placed in the hands of the State Council, which is a relatively large body containing a majority of Asiatic members elected from among the native chiefs and district heads. From the State Council is appointed a Supreme Council, composed of four Asiatics and three Europeans, and by the new Constitution Order it was enacted that the Rajah can only act with the advice and consent of this Council. Thus the Constitution of 1941 was quite remarkable for the democratic nature of the administration which it finally ensured.

At the end of 1941, the Japanese invaded Sarawak and occupied the country, to which, unfortunately, Great Britain was unable to provide the protection which she had guaranteed in the treaty of 1888. For almost four years the people of this little State suffered cruelties, hardships and humiliations, of which news is only just now becoming available. The full story will merit publicity, for it is a story of heroism and fortitude unsurpassed in the history of the war. The Chief Secretary of Sarawak is now reported to have been murdered by the Japanese, last July, on the very eve of liberation. But he left behind documents among which is a page of manuscript setting forth the reasons why he refused to leave Sarawak on the first arrival of the Japanese forces. It is worth quoting, since it represents the attitude, not only of himself as the Senior European Officer in Sarawak at the time, but of the whole of the Administrative Service:

> By the inexorable march of circumstances, forced on a people who had little or no say in their development, war has come to Sarawak with all its sufferings and hideous results. With these people of Sarawak, among whom I have spent many years of my life, I have determined to remain and to share with them their sufferings during this period of trial. I do not regret this decision. I am proud to share with my companions in captivity this honour of hardship during a war which affects the lives of millions throughout the world.

Noble words, these, and movingly expressive of the spirit of unselfishness and self-sacrifice which actuated the whole of the administrative personnel in Sarawak. But this spirit also permeated other sections of the European community. The small band of missionaries, for example, remained behind with the greatest devotion to their duty, and most of them were captured. The Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak showed superb courage under the terrible conditions of captivity, and was himself on several occasions beaten up, put on starvation diet, and subjected to other cruelties for the most trivial "offences." Similar stories of self-sacrifice can be told of the Europeans in charge of industrial concerns. For example, the General Manager of the Sarawak Oilfields refused to escape in a ship which had come to evacuate Europeans because the Asiatic members of his staff were not allowed on board. This decision cost him his life a few days later when the Japanese arrived. Many of the Europeans who remained at their posts in Sarawak at the end of 1941 died in captivity. Most of those who survived are broken in health from the long strain of the almost intolerable conditions which they suffered. But, whatever their fate, they bear witness to the devotion of the European community to their work among the native population of Sarawak, a devotion which was reflected in the past by the happy and harmonious co-operation of the native peoples.

Now that the war in the Far East is over, there is a strong move from certain quarters for a Malayan Union which would involve a drastic alteration of the status of Sarawak. What has been proposed is nothing more or less than the bringing of Sarawak within the operation of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, so that its internal affairs may be controlled under legislation by the Crown in Council. In other words, it is proposed that, without further ado, all the present treaty relationships between the Sarawak Government and Great Britain should be abrogated, and this without any consultation with the peoples of Sarawak themselves. But it is clear from the Sarawak Constitution of 1941 that neither the Rajah nor his Provisional Government in this country can agree, even tentatively, to such a proposal. It must first be considered by the State Council of Sarawak, when this has been reconstituted with proper representatives; and the reconstitution of the Council cannot be effected until Allied troops have left Sarawak soil and the normal civil government has been restored. It may well be a matter of convenience for the British Government to settle the business now, but it seems certain that such a clandestine settlement would not only be illegal; it would be tantamount to that type of territorial aggrandisement against which the United Nations have been struggling for the last six years. It may well be that, for purposes of Far-Eastern strategy, Sarawak should form part of the union of Malaya. It may even be that the State Council of Sarawak, when it has duly been consulted, would agree to such a step for the purposes of defence. But there seems no possible excuse for over-riding the independence of Sarawak to the extent of installing a Resident British Representative who would have the power to direct all matters of internal policy and administration. As stated by a recent correspondent in *The Times*, the only clear moral grounds for seeking to abrogate the existing treaty would be proof of maladministration in Sarawak. But this is not claimed.

An interesting comparison may be drawn between Sarawak and Java. In Java there is the gravest unrest, since a powerful section of the native population has expressed disapproval of Dutch administration. But the British Government apparently accept the view that, before any discussions can take place on the future status of Java, the legal *status quo ante* must first be restored. In Sarawak, the evidence to hand

points to the present anxiety of the native population for a *return* to the pre-war administration. There is all the more reason, therefore, why the British Government should accede to this request by restoring the civil Government under the Constitution Order of 1941 *before* attempts are made, almost certainly against the will of the native peoples, to add Sarawak to the Colonial Empire. And even if, by a species of legalistic jugglery, it were possible to effect such a transference now, surely this would be a ghastly betrayal of those who for years have been working for the democratic independence of Sarawak, and who have now given their lives for the country.

W. E. Le Gros Clark

ART AND HUBBUB

The commotion about Picasso has been great fun, a harlequinade to enliven our Christmas. The peelers and pantaloons were well up to their old form, but nothing amused me more than Mr. Evelyn Waugh gravely assuring the readers of *The Times* that admirers of Picasso were not necessarily, in other respects, stupid. Ever since his first book I have thought him the foremost of our comic writers. Altogether it has been a delightful change, a sign that peace has returned, to have a controversy about art instead of about the Churchill Tank or the Second Front. But it may be worth while to attempt a postscript, because the issues have become so confused.

Most of the complaints against the paintings at the V. and A. have been based on one (or both) of two assumptions that I believe to be false: (1) All good art can be appreciated without special study. (2) All good art is beautiful.

Let us begin by considering the first of these. Thousands of persons who have been to look at the Matisses and Picassos had little or no previous experience of contemporary painting. They do not frequent the London Group, the Leicester or Lefèvre Galleries—or even, I suspect, the Tate, where pictures by Matisse, Picasso, Rouault and other such artists have been visible for years. Consequently they were as much puzzled as if they had been confronted for the first time with a game of chess or a novel in Russian. Unfamiliarity with the idioms employed provoked dismay and indignation: so some of them wrote to the newspapers. Doubtless without knowing it, they were only repeating the language of Nazi Berlin, for they hit upon the same shop-soiled and merely emotional term of abuse—"degenerate."

One might classify people according to whether their response to something that they find surprising is curiosity or moral indignation. (This applies to ideas no less than to pictures, books and music.) Most people belong to the second class. But the odd thing in the recent controversy was that so many of the letter-writers evidently felt in 1945 just as much at sea as their parents had felt at the first Post-Impressionist exhibition in 1910. All the exhibitions since then, all the books on contemporary painting, for them did not exist. And what makes this still odder is that the influence of Picasso is visible on almost every hoarding and in the textiles in almost every home.

That a work of art is difficult to appreciate proves neither that it is good nor bad. From Turner onwards most innovations in the arts have excited amazement and therefore disgust. The works of Wagner and Gauguin, for instance, were at first condemned as wilfully ugly, but familiarity with them has revealed their chief fault to be an excess of lusciousness. It is noticeable that before the nineteenth century such outbursts of indignation were comparatively rare. The reason, I think, is not only that innovations were more gradual, but also that the man in the street was less vocal. For it was then assumed that some study was required for the comprehension of art. Nobody supposed that the light of nature would enable him to enjoy Horace. It was necessary at least to have made the Grand Tour before setting up as a judge of pictures. Reynolds was at pains to point out that the Raphaels in the Vatican had meant little, even to his trained eye, at first sight. Long contemplation was needed before he perceived them to be unsurpassed masterpieces. This was characteristic of the time. Only with the rise of the new manufacturing classes did the notion gain ground that taste required no cultivation. "I know nothing about art but I know what I like": when I hear this, I am amazed. For after spending immensely more time than most people in looking at painting, I often don't know whether I like a picture or not, till I have had the chance to become familiar with it.

Would the peppery gentlemen who wrote to *The Times* or the *Daily Telegraph* maintain that they could appreciate without any training the sculpture of Chartres, or Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, or a late quartet by Beethoven? Or would they prefer to deny that these had high artistic value? For my part I do not see how any thoughtful person can maintain that all good art is easy to appreciate. And probably only the more naive of the complaints were based on this assumption—those, in fact, which were directed against Matisse as well as Picasso.

Anyone familiar with twentieth-century painting can see that Matisse's pictures reflect a sensuous delight in the visible world. Some critics indeed condemn them, in my opinion most unjustly, as too elegant, too "drawing-room," just because they have a decorative quality such as one enjoys in the paintings of Veronese or Fragonard. The Picassos, on the other hand, are liable—I should even suggest intended—to disconcert even those who have taken the trouble to study painting. Many of them can fairly be called ugly. And this brings us to the second assumption: "All good art is beautiful." This is much more tricky to discuss, because there is no agreement upon the definition of beauty. When Rembrandt painted a flayed ox, was the result "beautiful"? Are realistic paintings and sculptures of the flagellated Christ "beautiful"? And the ravings of Leontes, the railings of Thersites? And Swift's account of the Yahoos? And Goya's royal portraits? And Smollett and *Hard Times* and *La Cousine Bette*? In a sense any masterly performance can be called beautiful, even the excision of an appendix. But I think it more useful to reserve the term for what gives pleasure to the senses, whether it be a flower or a work of art. If one adopts some such definition, it becomes evident that the purpose of art is something wider than the creation of beauty—is, shall we say, so to express the artist's imaginative vision that his emotions are communicated to those who meet his work, even centuries after his death. Whether these war-time Picassos succeed in doing this is open to discussion, though it has been little discussed. When the exhibition opened, I offered my opinion, affirmative but not on the whole enthusiastic. (The pictures differ greatly in value.) It seems that the more sophisticated assailants of Picasso have been complaining, not that he expresses nothing, but that he expresses something disagreeable. He does. So did Shakespeare, often; and Swift and Balzac and the other artists I have mentioned. One may prefer art to be genial and humane—I do myself; it is, however, frivolous to deplore every other order of art.

According to his mood Picasso can be delightedly elegant (as in many of his etchings) or brutally misanthropic. Partly for this reason there has for decades been much disagreement about particular pictures by him, and even whole periods in his career. Some people consider him one of the greatest artists Europe has ever produced, as undeniably he has been one of the most influential. Others mistrust his versatility, or dislike the "literary" overtones in his work, and consider him little more than a prodigious virtuoso. But I doubt if anyone under sixty who has given time and attention to the study of painting both ancient and modern, would think of denying his extraordinary powers. Only very simple persons can believe that he does not know how to draw or that he is a practical joker. It is almost an insult to the reader's intelligence to insist upon this fact, but this controversy has shown that newspapers do print letters from very simple people. Simple, I mean, where visual art is concerned. The painful truth is that we live in an incomparably specialised age.

Any educated man could understand Lyell's *Principles of Geology* or Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Modern innovations in science on the other hand appear in works that only experts can follow. Poetry and music, no less than painting and natural science, make increasing demands upon those who seek to understand them; one may regret the fact, as Mrs. Partington regretted the Atlantic, but it is useless to follow her example and deny it. It is not Lord Keynes's fault that only experts can read his great book: his command of language is not inferior to John Stuart Mill's, but what he has to say is far more complicated. The chief moral to be drawn is that the world is very full of things that are very difficult to understand; and that if we do not understand something, it is sensible either to try to learn or to keep quiet. But the Philistine, like the Puritan, cannot tolerate the spectacle of his fellows enjoying any activity from which he is debarred.

Roger Marvell

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

The once-sublime Mikado,
Knocked out by a tornado,
Renounces consanguinity
With Nippon's Shinto God,
And tells the Nippon laity
With graceful spontaneity,
Imperial divinity
Is not now à la mode.

The Emperor's successor,
Irked by external pressure,
Demands supreme authority
To guide the conquered race;
The East's Supreme Commander
Is getting up his dander,
For rule by a majority
Implies a loss of face.

MacArthur's Son of Heaven,
Not one among eleven,
(Though human his progenitors
No prestige he resigns).
He claims his single veto
In realms of Hirohito
Before assembled Senators
And State Department shrines.

The sentence of dethronement
Requires some prompt atonement,
Reduced to such nonentity
MacArthur may not play.
Moscow's Far East Commission
Has made a rash decision,
Mistaking the identity
Of General MacA.

Sagittarius

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Aladdin" at the Cambridge Theatre

Mr. Emile Littler's production of *Aladdin* is slick and good-tempered and offers excellent comedy with the minimum of sentiment. Miss Binnie Hale gives one the pleasure of watching a capable workman knock sparks out of a job he enjoys, Widow Twankey has immense style and is upholstered past dreams, and the costumes compensate in sequins for what is still austerity in the sets. Especially memorable are three sublime comedians in the high Marx Brothers tradition of inconsequent lunacy, and a surrealist performance of the song about poems and trees and their relative merits for which we have waited years.

"Worm's Eye View," at the Whitehall Theatre

Worm's Eye View takes the lighter side of the billeting feud where *No Room at the Inn*, shown recently in the provinces, dealt with its occasional horror. Mr. Delderfield is most at home with his airmen, and as character-studies four of them at least could hardly be bettered. This excellence in dialogue makes good comedy on its own merits, but in the long run it is patchy and inadequate redemption for unsatisfactory theatrical craftsmanship. Two of the three main plot-threads are the stuff of melodrama rather than of naturalistic comedy—first, the impossible landlady and her virtuous son; and secondly, the pair of young lovers, one of whom is an airman called Mark, doomed to teach English literature ever since he defended the Lakes so passionately in Scene I,

and the other an ingénue as embarassingly wild and faun-like as Elline. If the author could shorten some of his love-scenes, soften his villains into probability and tighten the whole thing into line with the good theatre-sense he shows in almost all his curtains, we might lose the unhappy feeling that we are listening to a bed-time fairy-story told to the baby ground-crews of to-morrow. However, the play is entertaining for Mr. Hobbs's middle-aged and charming *Pop*, brother to that officer in *Journey's End* who read *Alice* under all conditions, for Mr. Bazell's racy Casanova and for Mr. Ronald Shiner's dazzlingly Cockney grey-marketeer, sharp and witty to his inquiring nose-tip.

RADIO NOTES

CHRISTMAS this year took place in an atmosphere of disguised uncertainty—of mixed resignation and relief in a dubious world, sicklied o'er by a thin but vociferous convention of Auld Lang Syne. On Christmas Eve the tireless and ubiquitous Wynford Vaughan Thomas took us for a most revealing trip round the London streets, in search of local opinion. "What are *you* going to do this Christmas?" "Oh, I dunno." "Depends on coupons" (giggle). Those and similarly blank replies, all indicative of the low standard of happiness induced by the Pre-fabrication Age, came from the part of London now ruled over by that paradise of Philistinism, Oxford Street. In Bethnal Green a very different spirit prevailed. A little boy, asked what he expected, answered firmly: "A train and a book." A man laughed unaffectedly and said: "I mean to drink myself under the table." Insincere? Unedifying? Very well; but I suggest that those two respondents were alive, and knew what life was about, whereas the genteel waverers from the pseudo-West End could only be described as existing.

It was Bethnal Green again which came best out of the Christmas Day radio jamboree, "Wherever you may be." This hook-up programme was—well, a hook-up programme. But no doubt these things are popular just because they are always the same, and this year the notes of friendliness and alleviation seemed less formal than usual. Especially, be it noted, in Bethnal Green. And the live broadcasts from distant places came through without the squawks and fades which usually spoil the effect of these passages. Those who go all out for Romance probably prefer the message to sound as if it came from a long way off, even if the words are largely indistinguishable. A good recording seems to them phoney—and so, of course, in a sense, it is. There are no true degrees in the actual.

By far the best Christmas broadcast I heard was the new *How*. In this programme Stephen Potter and Joyce Grenfell made a definite come-back. The scenes in the department store were a real inspiration, with Ivor Barnard wildly funny as the prototype of Sam Fairfechan. The music (by Victor Hely-Hutchinson?) was utterly appropriate, and the sequences were very expertly dovetailed.

At first I thought *The Snow Queen* was going to restore my childhood's terror and delight in that strange masterpiece. David O'Brien was—unlike most child actors—so very like a little boy, and Francis Collinson's music was simply and effectively charming. But with Kay's disappearance Country Magazine moved in, in a big way, with Mummerset songs by the flowers (much too long), and the magic of the story dissolved into a conventional radio play. Better this, however, than an excruciating piece of facetiousness entitled *The Distant Glory*, in which Variety tried its heavy hand at a seasonable fantasy. These things need uncommon imagination and skill; it is futile to attempt to make up for the lack of them by packing the cast with such front-rank players as Gladys Young and Felix Aylmer, whose excellence on this occasion seemed embarrassingly out of place. As if to add to the general impression of sumptuous folly, the musical background was made absolutely continuous.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*January 6th.* B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra and B.B.C. Chorus (2.30 p.m.); The Romney Marshes (Elizabeth Bowen, 7 p.m.); England—and Liberty (J. B. Priestley, 9.15 p.m.); Carnival (9.30 p.m.); Aksel Schiotz (11.3 p.m.).

January 7th. Dino Borgioli (10.45 p.m.).

January 8th. Concert (7.30 p.m.); Brains Trust (8.15); Alexander Brailowsky, (10.15 p.m.); Solitary Confinement (10.45 p.m.).

January 9th. Concert (7 p.m.); How to Look at a Town (J. Betjeman and D. Cleverdon, 10 p.m.).

January 10th. Concert (3 p.m.); George Eliot (L.P., 3 p.m.).

January 11th. Football Pools (7.30 p.m.). So This is Love (9.30 p.m.); Call Yourself a Detective (Quiz, L.P., 10.10 p.m.); Berg Violin Concerto (11.30 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Nous les Gosses," at the Academy
"La Mort du Cygne," at Studio One
"The House on 92nd Street," at the Odeon
"Confidential Agent," at Warner's

Arriving a few moments late for *Nous les Gosses*, I found the battle in full swing: a rush across broken ground was being met by tough resistance; swords clashed, bladders swung, warriors embraced furiously and toppled; a luckless female was hauled down from a cart; a dustbin lid rose and lowered at intervals, revealing a pair of wide-open eyes—those, no doubt, of some special correspondent in the thick of combat; then a bell began ringing, there was a stampede across streets, and in the playground, warfare became a free football that ended with the ball flying through the big pane of glass over the door—breaking-up day for *les gosses* in more senses than one. They go on romping seriously for an hour or more of adventure; the pane of glass (1,800 francs) must be paid for during their holidays. Every morning sees them setting out as bootblacks, singers, beggars' assistants, sellers of flowers and patent hair-curlers, and these activities bring them in contact with policemen and a pair of crooks. It is the world of *Our Gang* (did you ever stumble on those little newsreel terrors?) but done with a serious charm and light inventiveness one might expect under French direction. Louis Daquin manages the children beautifully. One doesn't, thank goodness, feel that any of them are marked out for stardom or following in the steps of other little stars; even their precocities come natural. This film didn't spring altogether out of fun, for it was made during the Occupation, but there is no trace of strained whimsies or a wrapped-up message, the only moral being the obvious one that one can make up differences and work for a common cause. Families as well as Francophiles will enjoy a visit to the Academy. *Us Kids*, by the way, the English title, has a cunning idiomatic lure that doesn't always extend to the sub-titles. The headmaster is easily recognisable as such, but why tease us by calling him a "director"?

Children again in *La Mort du Cygne*, revived at Studio One. This film of Benoit-Lévy and Marie Epstein, pretty as a Christmas card, communicates a real feeling for childhood, one's first loves and jealousies, the ballet, the Paris Opéra. Few more graceful subjects than a ballet school exist for the camera, and attached to it are devotions and penances that may suggest the convent. The twelve-year-old heroine condemns herself to limp for an hour a day because she has made a famous dancer fall and break her leg. *La Mort du Cygne* is true to the passions and melodramas of childhood. Its weak point (if it has one) is in the portrayal of grown-ups: the two ballerinas who loom like divinities. Possibly they're not meant to be expressive, except when dancing.

Of the two spy thrillers, *The House on 92nd Street* (already reviewed) is both the more thrilling and far the more convincing. It gives away just enough of the working of the F.B.I. to stagger the ignorant and to deter (one would imagine) the professional spy with an eye on America. *Confidential Agent* harks back to the Spanish war and a London that looks darker than it ever did in the black-out. Mr. Boyer, despite his accent, gets shot at in Soho; Miss Lauren Bacall, despite her's, is the sultry daughter of a colliery-owning peer. She doesn't ravish quite as she did: one has time, in fact, to notice that, with jumper and side-lighting, she is being groomed in the usual fashions of sex-appeal. Easily the most exciting thing about this long gloomily shadowed piece is Miss Katina Paxinou, whose mere presence switches on a light.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

FASCISM AND THE LAW

SIR,—It is not a little disturbing to observe the caution, nay the timidity, with which a Labour Home Secretary approaches the question of dealing with Fascist propaganda.

It is difficult, he says, to frame legislation . . . possibilities will be carefully explored, etc. The language of studied inaction, the language of Tory politicians whose heart was not in their work. For new legislation is quite unnecessary as I have no doubt the Attorney-General will advise him; the Common Law provides all that is wanted to lock up anti-Semites, or at least to make a good beginning of the job. The Common Law misdemeanour of "Sedition" is defined by the learned editor of Harris and Nilghive's "Criminal Law" as *inter-alia* "those practices whether by deed, word or writing which. . . have for their object to excite discontent or dis-satisfaction, *to excite ill-will between different classes of the King's subjects.*"

It would appear, therefore, that we are in need not so much of new laws as of vigorous enforcement of existing law. H.M. judges would, I have little doubt, rule that racial propaganda could be sedition, and if the facts could be put before a court (and why cannot they?) it is reasonable to expect a British jury to convict.

Finally, if the Attorney-General and Mr. Chuter Ede cannot pluck up their courage to see if this machinery will work, perhaps a subscription could be opened to finance a private prosecution in the King's Bench by means of a criminal information. The result might be startling and I for one would gladly subscribe a few guineas.

PETER EVANS

Inner Temple.

PALESTINE

SIR,—No one denies that individual Jews and individual Arabs in normal circumstances get on well together. So did Jews and Aryans in Germany before 1932. Very few deny that Arabs have benefited from Zionist improvements, or that Palestine could, with modern development, support a greater population than it does at present. But one is up against the inescapable fact of anti-Jewish feeling among an illiterate population, not in Palestine alone, which is being stirred up by interested persons for their own political ends.

From people I have spoken to since my return from the Middle East, I gather that the significance of the anti-Jewish riots in Egypt, and the worse ones in Tripolitania, has been played down. In Tripoli, more than 150 Jews—not Zionists, but Jews who had worked side by side with the Arabs for hundreds of years—were slaughtered in circumstances which would have done credit to Herr Himmler. It appears—I speak without special knowledge—that the riots were fomented from outside in support of pan-Arab solidarity, and that anti-Jewish propaganda, and the possibility of loot, had sufficient influence with a sufficient proportion of the Tripolitanian Arabs to stir up trouble where previously little anti-Jewish feeling had existed. The presence in Tripolitania of a substantial British garrison, while it prevented the riots from spreading, did not save many Jews from being burnt alive in their homes, or their children from having their throats cut.

The Zionists cannot be blamed for believing that the 1939 White Paper terms were a surrender to Arab violence, and taking note of that fact for future reference. If the Joint Committee report does not offer them the security they must have—and it seems inescapable that a Jewish-controlled Palestine is the only answer from their point of view—they are likely to act on their growing belief that force must be met by force. If they do, there are plenty of Muslim leaders with axes to grind who will be only too eager to make capital out of the resulting situation. On the other hand, if the Committee's report seems to Arab extremists to be pro-Jewish, the opportunity is given to the same people to exploit the nuisance value of anti-Jewish violence. Certain persons in Egypt, for example, would far rather take the minds of the

fellahin off the "condition of the people question" by the excitements of an anti-Jewish holy war.

It is no good wishing that the human factors were other than they are, or that the Arab masses were not so inflammable and politically ignorant. Of course, the vast majority of the Jews in Palestine want nothing more than to be left alone to work out their destiny in peace. Who doesn't—including a vast majority of the Arabs? But they are not going to be left alone, and the *Hajanah* seems to be preparing for the action it considers necessary in the circumstances. We may think the action misguided on a long-term view. But to many young Zionists, impatient of the failure of commission, conference and negotiation, with the Damocles sword of Arab violence hanging always over their heads, it seems the only way.

22 York Mansions, S.W.11. L. V. THOMPSON

SIR,—To some minds, "the Jews" can never do right. The overt Mosleyites form one category; another seems to be those folk whose love for the Arabs apparently is used as a convenient stick with which to beat the Jews. Miss Margaret Pope is irritated, for instance, because a Jewish Labour building organisation in Palestine "made something" out of the presence of the British army in the Middle East during the war. It had the temerity to earn more than the Arabs. Can it possibly be that the Jews undertook larger-scale works? And what nefarious practice were the Jewish builders up to? Helping us to win the war.

Is Miss Pope right in supposing that Zionism in Palestine cuts the economy of the country into two? Is it not more nearly true that the Jews have created an entirely new and *additional* economy? Contrary to her belief, Jewish and Arab economic life does fuse to some extent. Jews buy from Arabs and vice versa. (It seems odd that she, presumably a Socialist, should approve of an anti-Jewish boycott instigated by the Arab League. It is difficult to see how anyone, except those in the two categories mentioned above, can condone such characteristically Fascist practices.)

Miss Pope states that Arab wages in industry are between 75 and 500 *mils*. Since she happens to be keen on building, I looked up detailed figures given by the Palestine Government for that industry. In October, 1944, Arab stone-masons were earning between 1,000–1,350 *mils* per day, Arab bricklayers between 1,000–1,300 *mils*. (The Jewish equivalents incidentally were 1,200–1,750 and 1,100–1,650.) The lowest wage earned by an unskilled Arab labourer was 550 *mils*, i.e., 50 *mils* higher than the highest figure quoted by Miss Pope. J. ANTHONY

93 Hornsey Lane, London, N.6.

PERSIA

SIR,—As I write this letter the Foreign Ministers of America, Great Britain and Russia are meeting in Moscow to discuss their recent differences—one direct result of which has been the setting up of an autonomous Government in the North-Western province of Persia, which was timed to be an accomplished fact on the eve of this meeting.

We Persians, like most other people in the world, realise that the recent Anglo-American policy in regard to atomic energy has given the Russians an anxious sense of insecurity—hence their indulgence in the old-fashioned practice of power politics and victimisation of smaller nations such as Persia, which is situated between two Great Powers. We are being dismembered and made a pawn in the game, because the Great Powers cannot agree among themselves as to the best way of securing the peace of the world. However, we believe that our present predicament will be of short duration and America and Britain will so improve their relations with Russia as to enable the latter to fulfil her treaty obligations and to respect the integrity and independence of Persia.

The much-hoped-for co-operation between the three Great Powers may check the aggressive designs of Russia for the time being; but peace, happiness and prosperity will never come to this part of the world as long as British policy continues to support the reactionary ruling class of Persia. During the past four years official British representatives in Persia have supported, both directly and indirectly, the corrupt clique which rules this country and which owns 99 per cent. of all its wealth. The justification they offer for this policy is the old imperialistic jargon of "Preservation of Law and Order, the need for conservation of *status quo*," in order to avoid disturbing the present order of things. The propagation of this policy, which is recommended and sponsored by those British officials generally imbued with the so-called "Anglo-Indian" mentality has caused the majority of Persians to be distrustful of British policy, both in the past as well as the present. Should this policy be continued further one can safely assume that the success of the "Tudeh" party is assured in the not distant future, and a Communist Government will eventually be set up in Persia which will not altogether be pleasant to British interests.

The best contribution that the British Labour Government can make to peace and stability in this part of the world is to revise the past policy of the British Foreign Office. M. ABDOL

Tehran, Iran.

RATIONS AND RELIEF

SIR,—A deputation from "Save Europe Now" (which has just been formally constituted, with the Master of Balliol, Dr. Sidney M. Berry, the Bishop of Chichester, Dr. Gilbert Murray and Earl Russell as sponsors) recently waited upon the Minister of Food, and suggested various methods by which the widespread desire to contribute food on a voluntary basis for European relief might be made effective. All were rejected, and so was a proposal that people who eat in restaurants should be required to surrender "points"; we are glad to record, however, that 90,000 tons of surplus stores, "thrown up" in the change-over to peace conditions, have been sent by the Minister to Central Europe.

But while the 60,000 men and women who have offered to give up part of their rations will not, for the time being at least, be allowed to do so, we wish to call attention to a method by which they can achieve the same result.

The allocation of food to the various British relief organisations working in Europe has now been increased, and their activities have been extended to include the civilian populations of Germany and Austria. These were among the proposals which we urged when we went on deputation to the Minister of Food. But in order that the additional quantities of food may be taken up, a sum of approximately £100,000 will have to be raised by public subscription; and we most urgently beg that contributions should immediately be sent to the Food Relief Fund, COBSRA (Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad), 75 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1. We suggest that everyone who was prepared to surrender "points" should refrain from using them, and should send the money so saved to the fund.

There are several other ways, small but important, in which individuals can help the various countries. They have been detailed in a memorandum, which will be sent to any inquirer on receipt of a postcard at the address below.

VICTOR GOLLANCZ (*Chairman*)
ELEANOR F. RATHBONE (*Vice-Chairman*)
"Save Europe Now,"
14 Henrietta Street,
Covent Garden, London, W.C.2.

ITALY

SIR,—I am glad to have drawn the Zilliacus fire, which illuminates my question more vividly than I dared to hope. He tells me:

(1) That Italian Labour organs are "longing to take over" (an ambition common to all parties);

I Feng

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JONATHAN CAPE

(2) That there is "strong Italian opposition against such an eventuality" (I tried to say so);

(3) That "the only kind of society" in post-war Italy is a "largely Socialist" one (why?);

(4) That the "only Government willing and able to build such a society" is one which "must accept the united leadership of the Socialist and Communist parties" (naturally);

(5) That I am a "sinner" for not wishing to intervene on the side of the Left.

There you have it—dictatorship of the Left. There is only one possible form of Government and I am a sinner if I don't conform. The failure of the Left, according to Zilliacus, must lead to Fascism: the success of Zilliacus, according to me, leads to the imposition of a dull uniformity. Must we think in these extreme terms? is it not possible that State elephantiasis, from whatever quarter, frustrates the art of living?

I only wished, in my letter, to convey my own impression that Italy, despite conquests, Fascism, hunger, poverty, and a pretty harsh war experience, had remained (as perhaps through so many generations and revolutions she has always remained) an astonishingly gay, human, untidy, beautiful, lovable country; and that the imposition of any alien political creed would be neither successful nor desirable.

My difference with Zilliacus is that he thinks that AMG stopped a revolution: I don't. The war rescued Italy from political serfdom, and AMG provided a pause for thinking things over. And if we ask what political serfdom is, I must remember that I have been dragooned into war for ten years of my life, sacked from innumerable jobs because I didn't "conform" with authority, and am now in a state of being prevented from doing almost everything. We may all be drifting into serfdom, and I don't believe that Left or Right provides any guarantees against it. In the meanwhile, life exists as well as politics, and in Italy, thank God, they are still quite separate. So, in company with Mr. Bevin, I sin gladly, and repeat my plea that we should let Italy alone.

LIONEL FIELDEN

55 Park Lane,
London, W.1.

INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

SIR,—The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has dismissed the petition by Mr. S. N. Chopra for leave of appeal against the sentence of death passed on him for his share in the activities of the I.N.A. Whatever the legal arguments, the men of the I.N.A. represent the spirit of a freedom-loving people, struggling to attain its freedom. As such, any sentence passed on these men can only mean a condemnation of that spirit of freedom itself, a condemnation, moreover, sanctioned by a Labour Government. The disillusionment and bitterness that will inevitably follow in India if these men are to be executed—and it seems there is little hope left for Mr. Chopra—will poison our future relations for a long time. The struggle for Indian freedom will not be ended by legalised hangings or police firings and sadism. The victims will only become martyrs, and help to rally further resistance. On December 1st you rightly said that the death sentence would be most unwise in the case of the I.N.A. men. May we appeal to the India Office, even at this last hour, to commute the death-sentence passed on Mr. Chopra?

16 Turl Street, Oxford. DINENDU M. SEN

THE NIHILISTS IN LONDON

SIR,—The article by Mr. Harry Roberts in your issue of December 15th brought to my mind vivid memories of my boyhood.

When a youngster, I lived in a district between Acton and Shepherds Bush, somewhere near the "Seven Stars," Goldhawk Road. (I wonder if that garish and noisy pub is still standing?) From Chiswick Station, which was near the junction of the Goldhawk Road with the Hammersmith Road, a steam train used to shuttle over a single line, several times a day, to Acton, where it connected with the North London Railway main line. To and fro this train ran, passing the district of Turnham Green, under a wooden footbridge, skirting some brickfields, and ending its journey on the borders of the Acton recreation ground.

With other boys, I often went to the footbridge at Turnham Green to obtain by mass production tiny imitations of table knives. Pins were laid on the rails. The pressure of the engine would finish the job. The engine-driver and fireman added zest to the adventures by hurling expletives and coal as we bounded away when the leading wheels of the locomotive were only four to six feet away.

Tragedy, often foretold, at last happened. A man was run over and killed at the Turnham Green footbridge. Undoubtedly it was the retributive act of a just Providence. At least, so I was told by my very respectable parents and by other boys' parents, who were no doubt, since they were pillars of the same church, equally respectable.

By some process of reasoning, the man who was considered to be so justly punished by Providence was associated with a little band of agitators (I was told they were anarchists) who visited a little patch of green to receive their weekly dose of jibes and stones from the juvenile supporters of the respectable members of the church congregation.

I was warned. The warning was heeded. Sometimes, during the night, I would wake in a cold sweat, imagining that I saw hovering over me the bloody, mangled figure of a bearded ogre, complete with horns, cloven hoof and flowing red tie. I kept away from the Turnham Green footbridge, and even as a youth with his voice broken, I feared to go near to the locality.

Years passed. I reached, in spite of my early church training, not only years of greater discretion, but a more catholic taste in literature. I discovered that the Bible was not the only readable book. With some effort I managed to buy an *Encyclopedia of Social Reform*, published by Funk and Wagnalls.

Reading in this book about the Russian Revolutionaries, I discovered, with something of a mental shock, that the ogre who was killed by the train at the Turnham Green wooden footbridge was none other than Stepniak. The description of Stepniak's death in the Encyclopedia was correct, so far as I could remember, in all its details. I brooded over the revelation, and to this day feel angry and bitter at the unseemly obloquy flung at this fine man by people who always seem to get enough religion to hate others, but never enough to understand others. As Wilde has said: "Many people have sympathy with suffering, but sympathy with thought is rare."

Marston Lane, Frome. H. G. WYATT

JOHANN

SIR,—May I correct a misprint in the twelfth paragraph of my article on Austria in your last number? The war criminal banker is not Russian, but Austrian. His name is Johann and his war job was organising the looting of Yugoslavia for the Nazis. When recently arrested for interrogation, official intervention secured his release within twenty-four hours. He was at large and politically active at the time of the recent elections. JOHN A. F. ENNALS

BARON MUNCHAUSEN

SIR,—I am at present gathering materials for the life of Rudolf Erich Raspe (1737–1794), Anglo-Hanoverian savant and scientist, the original author of Baron Munchausen's Adventures. The latter part of his life was spent in England, Scotland and the West of Ireland (1775–94), many of his patrons being Freemasons. I should be most grateful if any of your readers who have any knowledge or materials concerning his life could communicate with me.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

WHEN Bishop Sprat wrote in 1667 of the "constant resolution" of the Fellows of the Royal Society "to reject all amplification, digressions, and swellings of style" he was giving formal notice that one manner of prose, that of the great Jacobean divines, Taylor and Donne, was dead. When he added that the Fellows were determined "to return to the primitive purity and shortness, when men delivered so many things almost in an equal number of words," he was saying that a hitherto submerged tradition of writing had become dominant. This submerged tradition may be examined in the works of the Elizabethan and Jacobean mariners, men who wrote as seamen, not as "wits and scholars," in such a work, for instance, as *The Strange and Dangerous Voyage of Captain Thomas James in his intended Discovery of the North-West passage into the South Sea*, published in 1633.

For us, who know so much more about the Arctic regions than James, who look at a map of North America, at Hudson Bay and Baffin Bay, at the maze of islands and channels, it is almost inevitable to read James' narrative as a heroic poem, a seventeenth-century *Battle of Maldon* with the ice playing the part of the Danes, but for James it was simply an extended log. He was an experienced sailor; he had probably been with Button on his voyage to Hudson Bay in 1612; he knew precisely the kind of ship, for instance, most suitable for Arctic waters. "A great Ship," he writes, "was unfit to be forced through the Ice, wherefore I made Choice of a well-conditioned, strong Ship, of the Burden of 70 Tuns." And so, on May 2, 1631, he sails from Bristol in the *Henrietta Maria* with his crew of twenty men and two boys.

That *The Strange and Dangerous Voyage* was one of the sources of "The Ancient Mariner" has long been known; as Professor Livingston Lowes has said, James "provided . . . the raw materials for a new *Inferno*, all ice." Ice, indeed is the *leit-motiv* of the work. By June 4th the *Henrietta Maria* had reached Greenland. "It proved very foul Weather, and next Day, by two in the Morning, we found ourselves encompassed with Ice; and endeavouring to clear ourselves of it we were the more engaged, and struck many fearful Blows against it. At length we made fast to a great Piece, and, with Poles, wrought Day and Night to keep off the Ice; in which Labour we broke all our Poles." After that, they were never free from ice.

This was merely the beginning of a voyage that could be called, as truly as any, the worst journey in the world. James records it in a simple stately Anglo-Saxon prose, using words as though just hewn from the quarry. He is sometimes clumsy but it is impossible for him ever to be mean, and at times he can touch the heights of great utterance. At a crisis in their fortunes, he addresses the ship's company:—

> My Masters and faithful Companions, be not dismayed by any of these Disasters, but let us put our whole Trust in God. It is He that Giveth, and He that taketh away; He throws down with one Hand, and raiseth up with the other. If it be our fortunes to end our Days here, we are as near Heaven as in England.

It is not yet the English language as Sprat was to write it, but it certainly has the "close, naked, natural way of speaking, positive expressions . . . bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can," that he demanded. And it raises a ship's log to the proportions of epic.

Their fortunes were as bad as they could be. Caught among the ice, fighting with poles the bergs that threatened to crush them, they were forced to winter in James Bay. The *Henrietta Maria* they sank under the ice, built huts on shore, and set about building a pinnace in which to sail back to England. Comparison between feats of endurance is profitless. Reading *The Strange and Dangerous Voyage* one thinks of Shackleton's men on Elephant Island; but at least they were spared the scurvy that attacked James' crew:

> We had three Sorts of sick Men; those that could not move, nor turn themselves in their Beds, who must be tended like Infants; others were, as it were, crippled with Aches; and others that were something better; most had sore Mouths. . . . Our Surgeon, who was a dilligent and sweet-conditioned Man as ever I saw, would be up betimes in the Morning, and whilst he picked their Teeth, and cut away the pieces of Flesh from the Gums, they would bathe their Thighs, Knees and Legs. . . . This so mollified the grieved Parts, that though, when they rose out of their Beds, they would be so crippled that they could scarce stand, yet after this was done half an Hour they would be able to go (as go they must) to wade through the Snow to the Ship. . . . By Night they would be as bad again . . . and in this Manner we went through our miseries.

The most serious loss was that of the carpenter: "The 18th our Carpenter William Cole died; a Man beloved of us all, as much for his innate Goodness, as for the present Necessity we had of a Man of his Quality." Even though most of the time he could scarcely stand, he had worked incessantly building the pinnace.

Then, with the thaw, occurred what must have seemed a miracle; the *Henrietta Maria* had suffered no damage under the ice, was successfully raised, and they sailed away. But not for Bristol. The intrepid James was still set on finding the north-west passage. The ice beat him. "We could, from top Mast Head, see the Ice to the N.N.W., the N.W., and so round about by the S., to the E., and some there was to Leeward of us. It was all flat sound Ice, in main Rands, and the Sea as smooth as a Well among it." Reluctantly he listened to his officers and turned his course to home. He had been in the Arctic eighteen months and he and his men were the first Englishmen ever to winter in such latitudes.

James is not writing autobiography, but from his pages emerges an attitude—the Jacobean attitude:

> O my poore Soul, why dost thou grieve to see,
> So many Deaths muster to murder me?
> Look to thyself, regard not me; for I
> Must do (for what I came) perform or die.
> So thou mayst free myself from being in
> A dunghill Dungeon, a mere Sink of Sin. . . .
> We have with Confidence relied upon
> A rusty Wire, touch'd with a little Stone,
> Incompass'd round with Paper, and alas,
> To house it harmless, nothing but a Glass,
> And thought to shun a thousand Dangers, by
> The blind Direction of this senseless Fly. . . .

It is his one poem, written in the trough of his fortunes: he apologises for it. As much as his heroism it establishes his identity with his age; the voice of a man who otherwise, as seen in his log, is larger than life, but featureless.

James was among the last of his kind. In the half-century that followed, the northern vistas dwindled; Hudson Bay was less a possible route to Japan than a wilderness rich in pelts and skins to be taken for trapping. No poet of the Restoration could have addressed his mistress in Donne's words: "O my America! my new-found-land!" America was still promises, maybe, but Newfoundland meant fog and cod and cold. In 1669 or 1670 William Dampier made his first voyage, to Newfoundland; he was so "pinched" by the climate that he swore never to sail so far north again; and he kept his promise.

Besides, the Royal Society, in the person of Bishop Sprat, had spoken. Dampier again marks the transition. He is the sailor in the new scientific age. He cruises the world with one eye open for plunder but the other watching for hitherto unrecorded natural phenomena. That Dampier was a buccaneer is not so important as that, wherever he went, he charted, recorded, and made careful drawings of flora and fauna.

But the result of the change is seen most clearly in a lesser, though more attractive, man than Dampier, Woodes Rogers, whose *A Cruising Voyage Round the World*, was published in 1712. Dampier was his pilot. Because he was the most successful freebooter since the Elizabethans Rogers has been called an Elizabethan born out of his time. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He sails gaily, with unbounded curiosity, but also with a complete absence of awe. The world is novel but it is no longer mysterious; Woodes Rogers is in it—beyond the Mexique Bay, among the Philippines—by right; it is his Tom Tiddler's ground to be rifled at will. When James lands on an island in Hudson Bay the first thing he does is to look warily for traces of "savages"—and one feels behind the word all the fear of the unnatural, of "Anthropophagi and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders." For Woodes Rogers the "savage" has become the "poor Indian." Rogers has all the complacency of the Englishman of the reign of Anne. Thus, at one time he has thirty-five Negro prisoners, captured from the Spaniards.

> Being lusty Fellows, and after taking the Names of those that had any, and giving Names to those that wanted them (they) were placed with Arms and Powder in Charge of Michael Kendall, a free-Negro of Jamaica, with Orders to drill them continually to act as Marines in case we meet an Enemy. . . . And with a Dram all round to confirm the Contract, were told that now they must look upon themselves as Englishmen, and no more as Negro Slaves to the Spaniards.

The quotation is a good example of Rogers's prose, racy, easy, colloquial, fulfilling Sprat's requirements, comparable in suppleness to that of Defoe, who knew his work and was indebted to it; for Rogers brought Alexander Selkirk back from Juan Fernandez. His style is a superb instrument for narration; but what makes *A Cruising Voyage* so attractive is the author's skill in painting a self-portrait. It was precisely in this that Dampier was lacking, so that though a classic writer, as a human being he remains enigmatic; while with James there cannot be said to be a portrait at all, only a roughly sculptured attitude.

There can have been few more rigorous tests of leadership than that of captaining a privateering expedition. Dampier had failed dismally. Discipline as we know it to-day was unknown. Of the crew of Rogers's ship, *The Duchess*, "a third were Foreigners, while of Her Majesty's Subjects many were Tailors, Tinkers, Pedlars, Fiddlers, and Hay-makers . . . with which mixed Gang we hope to be well-manned as soon as they have learnt the Use of Arms, and got their Sea-Legs." Time and again Rogers faced mutiny: time and again, sometimes by flogging, sometimes by "jollying," he won his way.

He had set sail to fight and plunder the Spaniards. He behaved with great gallantry towards his prisoners. "We allowed," he says, and it is surely the free-born Englishman speaking, "Liberty of Conscience on board our Floating Commonwealth, and there being a Priest in each Ship, they had the great Cabin for the Mass, while we used the Church of England Service over them on the Quarter-deck; so that the Papists here were Low Church men."

Rogers's reflections on the death of his brother in action are in character: "As I began this Voyage with a Resolution to go through with it, and the greatest Misfortune shall not deter me, I'll as much as possible avoid being thoughtful and afflicting myself for what can't be recalled, but indefatigably pursue the concerns of the Voyage." In his (indefatigable) pursuit he had part of his upper jaw shot away by a bullet. But his ships captured the great Spanish treasure galleon, "the Manila ship," the first time it had fallen to the English since Cavendish took it in 1587. They brought back to England plunder valued at £170,000. More important for us, they brought back *A Cruising Voyage*. And the portrait that emerges from it is that of a born leader of men, a born organiser, unselfconscious, unreflective, unscrupulous, tolerant; high-spirited, fond of a practical joke, even at times a wag; a man who has learnt, like Selkirk on Juan Fernandez, "to be very easy."

WALTER ALLEN

SHORT STORIES

It May Never Happen. By V. S. PRITCHETT. *Chatto and Windus.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Better Than a Kick in the Pants. By J. MACLAREN-ROSS. *Lawson and Dunn.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Stories of the Forties. Selected by REGINALD MOORE and WOODROW WYATT. *Nicholson and Watson.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Short stories have bred and multiplied during the war with the exuberant, mechanical monotony of a bed of oysters. A few pearls gleam lustrously in *Stories of the Forties*, a varied and representative anthology which Mr. Moore and Mr. Wyatt have designed to carry on the tradition of the annual series of *Best Stories* collected by the late Edward J. O'Brien. They include the bad as well as the good. At the time of O'Brien's death, they assert, "the type of short story that makes demands on the reader's intelligence and does not fall into the dreary groove of action, counter-action, automatic characters and trick ending, was being squeezed out of publication." If their dislike of the latter type of story is so great, it is difficult to explain the inclusion of their second story, *Outback*, by Victor Kershaw, which contains everything they condemn. Nor do all of their stories make demands on the reader's intelligence; some in fact appear to have made very few on that of the writers. There is the usual silly pseudo-Kafka fantasy by Mr. William Sansom, the usual lugubrious exploitation of yet another poor lunatic by Miss Anna Kavan. Certain other authors have discovered grooves of their own, so dreary that one would welcome anything as lively as a trick-ending.

There are very fine things to counterbalance all this; for example, Elizabeth Bowen's wonderful *Summer Night*, lengthy and detailed and leaving a suggestion of a vast hinterland of unexplored drama and feeling; Osbert Sitwell's amusing and mischievous *Staggered Holiday;* Michael McLaverty's *The Game Cock*, with its minute and brilliant observation, a story, like others in this book, written in the great tradition of *Dubliners;* Glyn Jones's lovely and pathetic *Wat Pantathro;* and excellent stories by Maura Laverty, Frank O'Connor, Rhys Davies and Gwyn Jones.

There is also V. S. Pritchett's amusing story about two clergymen and a bottle of whisky buried among the ruins of a bombed church; it is included in his new volume. Mr. Pritchett and Miss Bowen are our two best short-story writers. Certain things, including wit and humour and gifts of style, they have in common. Occasionally it also seems that Mr. Pritchett's stories have emerged, people, scene and situation all together, in the same romantic way as Miss Bowen's; this seems to be the case at least in those stories which centre on something approaching the tragic, as here in *Many are Disappointed* and *The Lion's Den*. But this is rarer with Mr. Pritchett than its opposite, the classical method. In his most characteristic—and his best—stories, he begins with particular people, chosen because of an intrinsic aptitude for drama which they seem to have. Their initial appearance is usually brilliantly done; there are the appropriate physical hints, and then a masterly crystallisation into the life, not of photography, but of comedy:—

> A sailor of course, and lost. Hopelessly, blindly lost. I calculated that he must have wandered twenty miles that day exhausting a genius for misdirection.
>
> "Here," I said, "you're soaked. Come and have a drink."
>
> There was a public-house nearby. He looked away at once.
>
> "I never touch it," he said. "It's temptation."

I think it was that word which convinced me the sailor was my kind of man. I am, on the whole, glad to say that I am a puritan, and the word temptation went home, painfully, pleasurably, exciting and intimately familiar. A most stimulating and austerely gregarious word, it indicates either the irresistible hypocrite or the fellow-struggler with sin. I couldn't let him go after that.

The character is properly established before he is confronted with the chosen situation; the story is how he deals with it. One must, I think, call this manner classical. The best of Mr. Pritchett's stories thus written—*Sense of Humour* in his earlier volume, *The Sailor* and *The Saint* in this one—appear at first and second readings to be as certainly assured of as permanent a place in comic literature as anything written in this century. His allegiance with Dickens, Wells and Jacobs is obvious. But he has also a different, more elusive, type of comic story which is wholly his own: its best examples here are *Pocock Passes*, *It May Never Happen*, and *The Chestnut Tree*, where a whole complex social world is built up with a seemingly precarious lightness of touch which is to be found in no other modern writer. Out of the solidity of lower middle-class life he has made something almost diaphanous.

It is the astonishing accuracy of his dialogue which contributes most to our acceptance of his world. Here is a speech which is as memorable as the comic speeches in Dickens:—

> "The important thing in life," Uncle Belton said to me, getting out a toothpick, "is to do the right thing. The Devil is always on the look-out for our weaknesses. Two and two make four, you can't argue with the law of progress. Phillimore can't argue with it any more than I can or you can, Vincent. I am disappointed in Mr. Phillimore. I said to him, multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, the servant who buried his talents was made to give to the others. Thou base and foolish servant. I don't want to influence nobody. I'm just putting the case as God sees it; and when Mr. Naseley said something the other day about the partners in his firm, two brothers who don't get on—pretty dreadful that, isn't it, two brothers—I said, 'God is my partner.' Naseley said to me, 'By God, Belton, you're right.' I said, '*I'm* not right. God is right. He will guide us.' By the way, I shouldn't mention Mr. Naseley's name at the office . . ."

Mr. Pritchett's stories are easier to read than those of any other contemporary writer; it is conceivable that they are harder to write, for so many faculties must be called into play before such stories can be even begun; and clearly these faculties ultimately demand the novel for their expression. Like many short-story writers of the past, Mr. Pritchett inclines to "pot" a good many elements of the novel into his stories. Hence they are richer than anything we are normally used to; they do not follow a current fashion and it is improbable that they will set a new one. They remain, like those of Miss Bowen, rare, individual, and unmistakeable. And like hers, they leave one wanting their author's next novel. If one finds any false note in *It May Never Happen*, it is the inclusion of the satirical fantasy called *The Ape*. It is unexceptionable of its kind; but should have been reserved for Mr. Pritchett's *Miscellaneous Papers*.

Stories of the Forties contains an incident from army life by Mr. Maclaren-Ross, called *They Put Me in Charge of a Squad*. In any other age than this, it would have been regarded as a sketch. The contents of his second book, *Better than a Kick in the Pants*, are likewise mainly sketches. Some of them indeed are no more than public-house anecdotes, and I cannot help feeling that *Any Bloody Thing Will Do* might have been a title equally expressive of the author's manner and approach. But once his fashionable, hard-boiled, slangy manner is accepted, it is possible to discover four original pieces in the book: a racy story about India called *A Bit of a Smash in Madras;* and three stories about the author's childhood in the south of France, in the section called *The Mandrake Root*.

HENRY REED

PATHS TO PEACE

Patterns of Peacemaking. By DAVID THOMSON, E. MEYER, and A. BRIGGS. *Kegal Paul.* 21*s.*

The Path to Peace. A DEBATE. Edited by GEORGE W. KEETON. *Pitman.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Thomson and his collaborators have produced an original and useful book. It is an analytical study of the tendencies which are likely to govern peacemaking. Its method and angle of vision, if not its material, are, therefore, for the most part different from those of the many books which seek to find a path to peace in the study of past failures to reach it. The method of the book is to move shuttle-wise between the past—principally at Versailles—and the future, and to compare the tendencies which made for and against successful peacemaking then with those which are likely to govern the attempt to establish peace now. For their purpose the authors divide their book into three sections, the boundaries of which are not very rigid, but which they call the technique, the framework, and the substance of peacemaking. In each part and in each chapter of each part the comparison is always between Versailles and to-day. In Part I they consider the "climate" and the timing and setting of peacemaking and the treatment of the defeated nations; in Part II the "framework" of peacemaking which covers historical patterns, the various contemporary theories and proposals, and an interesting chapter on the peacemakers, the governments and peoples who will be making or marring the peace; and finally in Part III the "substance" of peacemaking, under which is included a study of the types of international organisation which will or can be used in the peacemaking, the four possible patterns of peace which the peacemakers can use, and the problems of a planned settlement.

The book is so full of meat that it is not easy to deal with in a short review. But for the same reason it would repay slow and intensive reading by any person who will be actively concerned in the making of peace. The authors originally intended to produce a purely objective study, but in the writing of the book they were led almost inevitably into revealing their own views as to the right and wrong methods and patterns of peacemaking. The fundamental conclusion which they have arrived at and which to a considerable extent has guided their footsteps and moulded their book will be accepted by most of their readers, for it is, in contrast to 1919, perhaps the most important element in the psychological climate of 1945. It is the conviction which the authors themselves, half-way through their book express as follows: "The very crux of peacemaking this time is success in *reconciling* the more negative tasks of keeping order and preventing aggression with the more positive tasks of achieving social security and economic well-being."

In such a detailed analysis of so many facts, organs and organisations, historical tendencies and movements, climates, patterns, and even persons, it is inevitable that the reader will every now and again run up against something from which he will strongly dissent. But on the whole the authors are so well-informed, so accurate, and so temperate that even a hostile critic would find it difficult to pick holes. The authors and their book do, however, suffer from one serious disadvantage, which is not their fault, but their misfortune. The pace of events during the last six months has already in many important points made their facts, arguments, and conclusions out of date. Many of their speculations and conclusions would necessarily have been different had they known, for instance, of what has happened in Germany since its collapse, of the relations between the U.S.S.R. and her two allies, of the San Francisco Conference, of the collapse of Japan, and of the portent of the atomic bomb.

The second is an omnibus book which is accurately described in its title and in which many distinguished people discuss sections in the path to peace. Their contributions are of very varying merit. Some are pretty thin,—for instance four

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and a half pages on the "Problem of an International Force" by J. M. Spaight. At the other end of the scale is an admirable paper on the "Judicial Settlement of International Disputes" by Professor Lauterpacht. LEONARD WOOLF

TOM, DICK AND GRUMBALD

The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Names. Compiled by E. G. WITHYCOMBE. *Oxford University Press.* 7s. 6d.

Mr. Withycombe is the first scholar to attempt a comprehensive account of the Christian names used in this country, and his book is packed with curious and delightful information.

Tristram Shandy contains the classical account of belief in the influence of names; and we know the trouble that Balzac, Dickens and Henry James took in choosing the names of their personages. Almost all of us, I fancy, find in many names a strong flavour, but often without agreeing upon its character; and our judgments depend considerably upon both our age and our class. Moreover any mistake about one's name is apt to be taken as an offence against one's person. I quite see that if one is *Sibyl*, it is exasperating to be addressed as "Dear Sybil," because this suggests that one's parents were either illiterate or admirers of Disraeli. But usually our feelings about our names are irrational, survivals as it were from the ages of belief in magic.

In his erudite introduction Mr. Withycombe shows how the fashions in names reflect historical events. The Renaissance brought in classical names, the Reformation substituted Old Testament names for saints' names. The Puritans moreover made such fearful innovations as *Safe-on-High*, *Sorry-for-Sin* and *Flie-Fornication*, to say nothing of *Kerenhappuch*, which—had they but known it—means "a horn of eyelash paint"! The eighteenth century brought in Latin forms (*Maria* instead of *Mary*, etc.), and also started the revival of medieval names like *Edgar* and *Matilda*. The Romantic Movement—Scott, the Tractarians, Tennyson—spread obsolete or new names through every class. Charlotte Yonge, for instance (herself the author of a book on Christian names), set a fashion for *Norman* and for *Ethel* (which appeared almost simultaneously in Thackeray). *Muriel* comes from Mrs. Craik, *Doris* from Mrs. Oliphant, *Lorna* from Blackmore, *Vera* from Marion Crawford (perhaps also, like *Natalie*, from the newly translated Russian novelists?), *Gladys* from Ouida, *Eric* from Dean Farrar. Edna Lyall introduced not only her own Christian name, found in the Apocalypse, but *Erica* and *Doreen* (which means "sullen"). The flowers—*Rosemary*, *Iris*, and the jewels—*Beryl*, *Ruby*—and some mysterious names like *Dulcie* also date from the second half of the nineteenth century. Miss Nightingale, who was born in Florence, set a fashion, but already Dickens had Florence Dombey. Scott and Charlotte Yonge revived *Guy*, which had been killed by Guy Fawkes. Ossian introduced *Oscar*, and the Wilde trial killed it. (I wonder how *Oswald* has been doing lately?) The Victorians were as fantastic in nomenclature as in architecture. My grandmother, who died seventy years ago, had a story of five sisters called *Ada*, *Eda*, *Ida*, *Oda* and *Uda*. Mr. Withycombe might have added a note on the Tollemache family, whose collection of Christian names is in a class of its own. One of them is called Lyulph Ydwallo Odin Nestor Egbert Lyonel Toedmag Hugh Erchenwyne Saxon Era Cromwell Orma Nevill Dysart Plantagenet Tollemache-Tollemache.

Another favourite nineteenth-century habit—a snobbery that defeated its own aims—was to use noble surnames as Christian names, *Dudley*, *Howard*, *Montagu*, *Neville*, *Percy*, *Russell*, *Sidney*. Also *Gordon* and *Stanley* though these reflected the vogue of the General and the explorer. *Arnold* and *Cecil* are interesting, because they began as Christian names, became surnames, and then Christian names again.

The variations in the social status of names is curious. Roger was one of the commonest medieval names—hence Hodge as a generic term for an agricultural labourer (c.f., moll, an early seventeenth-century slang term which has returned to us from America).

It is instructive to note how age throws a cloak of respectability over names of plebeian origin. Thus the medieval *Jack*, *Tom*, *Dick*, *Bob*, *Will* are now used by all classes; the seventeenth century *Sam*, *Ben*, *Joe* were freely used by the middle classes in the nineteenth century and would doubtless still be so used, but for the fact that their originals have gone out of fashion; but the modern *Les*, *Reg*, *Bert* have not yet had time to rise in the social scale.

"*Reggie* and *Bertie*, for some obscure reason," Mr. Withycombe adds, "have a much higher social standing than *Reg* and *Bert*." Sometimes the pronunciation varies with class: *Irene*, for instance, as it grows popular, becomes a dissyllable; so does Beatrice; the *a* in *Gladys* becomes short, and the *l* in *Ralph* is sounded. The nineteenth-century fancy names have now many of them become exclusively plebeian, and the educated fashion for the last thirty years has been for plain, old names like *Jonathan* and *Jane* and *Peter*. But whereas Americans like to give their children the names of *Duke* and *Prince*, a prudent English peer will now safeguard his infants from the guillotine by calling them *Albert* or *Marlene*. Has not *Clem* embellished the Prime Minister with an almost popular flavour? Mr. Withycombe tells us that in 1938 at least 20 per cent. of the parents in Tottenham gave names taken from film-stars, *Gary* and *Shirley* being the most popular. In France only names of saints, or of classical figures like Aristides, are permitted.

Though this dictionary contains a vast number of names, many of them unfamiliar to me, I notice the absence of the following—all of them carried by persons I know: *Amaryllis*, *Bonamy*, *Cressida*, *Launce* (see *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, presumably short for *Laurence*), *Leucha*, *Pansy* and, alas, *Winsome*. Other omissions are *Endymion*, which existed two centuries before Disraeli's novel, and *Burgo*, the name given to a friend of mine by Trollopian parents. But it was obviously impracticable to include every rarity. It is a pleasure to put so erudite a scholar as Mr. Withycombe right on one small point. *Jesus* is a common Christian name not only in South America but in Spain.

The book ends with an interesting list of the words derived from Christian names, including *davit*, *derrick*, *hector*, *jerry*, *jockey* and *tabby*. The oddest is *dandy*, which first emerges in 1780 in Scotland, a long way from Baudelaire and Barbey d'Aurevilly. The drink *Red Biddy* might be added to the list. Odd that the French word for a fox, *renard*, was taken from a Christian name.

Altogether this is a fascinating book. It may be recommended especially to new-found parents. They will find such pleasant names as *Belinda* and *Blase*. But they may, of course, prefer *Frusanna*, *Ughtred* or *Grumbald*.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE SUBJECTS OF DRAMA

The Frontiers of Drama. By UNA ELLIS-FERMOR. *Methuen.* 8s. 6d.

Miss Ellis-Fermor, whose book on Jacobean Drama is remembered and will continue to be read, widens her field in the present volume, applying to dramatic literature in general some

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SMOKELESS ZONES ARE NEWS

Conceived just before the war by the NSAS as the principle on which coal smoke abolition can best be based, Smokeless Zones now advance into the field of action. Recently both the Common Council of the City of London and the Manchester City Council agreed to ask for statutory powers to set up smokeless zones.

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of the conclusions arrived at in her earlier and more specialised essay. She has much to say that is new and striking; she writes with dignity and an assurance supported by scholarship that needs no insistence. Her aim, exactly described by the title of the book, is to examine what subjects, if any, have proved intractable to dramatic form, and why this should be so. Her conclusion is that religious experience (in itself, not in its results), and the epic, are the only types of material which offer a really obstinate resistance.

In itself this view is no doubt the one we should expect: *Emperor and Galilean*, and the second part of *Faust*, never quite come off on the stage, and we may agree that the reasons for this partial failure are that "the underlying interpretation demands too complex a manifestation." Miss Ellis-Fermor finds two exceptions to this rule: "In the sequence of the history plays, Shakespeare . . . achieved a reconciliation of epic material with dramatic form, somewhat as Milton, in *Samson Agonistes*, transmuted the matter of religious experience into drama." Miss Ellis-Fermor's analysis of Milton's tragedy is of convincing interest, but in the case of Shakespeare's historical canvases I should have thought the success was qualified by some loss of dramatic intensity, at least when one compares, say, *Richard III* or *Henry IV* with *Othello* or *King Lear*. No doubt the fascinating result of the film experiment with *Henry V* throws some light on the matter; and radio, it seems to me, might well be called in to do for *Faust II* what it so strikingly did for *Peer Gynt*. With some acuteness, Miss Ellis-Fermor attributes the astounding achievement of *Antony and Cleopatra* to the fact that the homogeneous nature of the imagery overcomes the intractability of the material. In the last analysis it is probably a question of the pressure at which the dramatist's imagination is working—a pressure always affected by philosophic conviction; and by this standard *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Samson Agonistes*, and *Brand* succeed where *Emperor and Galilean* and *Faust II* do not.

In Miss Ellis-Fermor's opinion tragedy is "an interim view of life." She appears to base this conclusion mainly on the classic case of *Troilus and Cressida*, which, as we know, was *not* Shakespeare's last word on the subject of human relationships. This view is supported, of course, by the Christian interpretation of life; but it seems to me that *The Tempest* has been over-interpreted. That obscure and lovely fantasy is a bran-pie from which almost anything can be—and has been—drawn. The comforting conclusions that have been inferred from it may, of course, be true, in which case *Hamlet* and *Troilus* are, as readings of life, inferior; but the argument requires proof which is not forthcoming. To us of to-day the arid but courageous vision of Sophocles may well seem nearer the truth; and there is nothing to show that this was an "interim reading," or that the Greek tragedian was working his way towards a *Tempest* of his own. To see life steadily and whole may well be to recognise its ultimately tragic nature.

These criticisms do not in the least affect the value of Miss Ellis-Fermor's examination of particular plays, of the stagecraft involved, or of her observations on contemporary drama, which are extremely searching. Playwrights in particular should benefit from her final chapter, which gives, by implication, some of the reasons why good modern tragedies are so scarce.

PAUL DOMBEY

HIMMLER, THE LAST PHASE

The Fall of the Curtain. By COUNT FOLKE BERNADOTTE. *Cassell.* 5s.

When Count Bernadotte first gave to the press an account of his sensational experiences in Germany he had the field almost to himself. But now this slim volume has to compete with the mountain of documents produced at the Nuremberg trial. They have revealed more about Nazi politics and personalities than he could ever hope to discover. And yet his story of the events in which he took a leading part is and will remain a unique historical document, even though it contains but a fragment of the picture of the final collapse of Nazi Germany. The fate of Germany was already sealed when he arrived in Berlin in February, 1945, but it may be true, as he suggests, that his convenient presence there hastened the end, and in particular that his efforts contributed largely to securing a bloodless capitulation in Norway and Denmark.

He found political chaos in Berlin. The leaders still clung to the hope that they might avert complete disaster by splitting the Allies, but they were unable to agree how to do it. Ribbentrop favoured concessions to the Russians and Himmler an approach to the Western Powers. Hitler's views on this issue are not revealed. The Count did not see him, but he felt his presence. The shadow of his power still lay over his followers even when he was a shattered wreck—the power of a name rather than of a man. A small clique led by Kaltenbrunner and Bormann, had formed itself round the Führer and was plotting against Himmler. But Himmler still professed loyalty to his oath. Germany was visibly crumbling, and yet he feebly sought the moral backing of a medical report before he was prepared to move against his Leader.

No one can doubt Count Bernadotte's hatred of the Nazis, but it is evident that he did not fully grasp the iniquity of the men with whom he was dealing. His final judgment is that "they were men lacking in all moral conceptions, in all loftiness of mind." They were "cowardly, undecided, irresolute." The description sounds strangely inadequate, as though the writer were measuring them against the wrong standard. We know them better now, but the paradox remains—the enormity of the offences and the pettiness, in some cases the insignificance, of the offenders.

T. H. MARSHALL

Religion in America. By WILLARD L. SPERRY. *Cambridge University Press.* 10s. 6d.

This volume introduces a new series: "American Life and Institutions"—a most promising venture. The Dean of the Divinity School in Harvard University, who is the author of the present volume, must be congratulated for having written an admirable study on a most difficult and complex subject.

In recent years we have come to realise that political and social institutions of any country can only be understood by a careful analysis of the impact of religious life on the general framework of society. Mr. Sperry gives a lucid, brilliantly written account of past and present religious life in America. Even if one cannot agree with the Dean that in coming years American religious life is likely to grow in intensity, his general observations and findings deserve pondering.

The book gains by its comparative method. It sets American religious history against the background of the English historic experience. We know of no other recent book on the subject which is of equal value to the sociologist, historian and general reader alike.

Last week Mr. Roger Marvell gave credit to the British Council as well as to the Trustees of the Tate for the Paul Klee exhibition at the National Gallery. The Director of the Tate informs us that the Trustees of the Tate were alone responsible.

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The usual prizes are offered for a letter explaining why an uncle that the present sent to him was meant for someone else, asking him to return it, and promising to send on the one intended for him. Limit 150 words, entries by January 15.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 829

Set by W. R.

Six guineas are offered for an original epithalamium in not more than eighteen lines.

Report by W. R.

What more auspicious than an epithalamium to open a New Year of peace? But a number of competitors chose to be sardonic, notably Allan M. Laing, Fergie and I. C. Saul. R. J. P. Hewison's pastiche included the line "Two multiplied to one," but was otherwise less imaginative than is usual with him. Frank Kermode, Granville Garley, Willy Tadpole, J. A. W., Henry Wray, R. V. G. and P. Baggalley sent good entries. I recommend thirty shillings each to J. E. D., Ronald Mason and Leslie Johnson; twelve shillings each to R. S. Jaffray, William Bliss and Allan M. Laing.

Hedge Epithalamium

For whom the dew-bright wings
Of pleasant bosom'd things
(Dear birds) the lowly raptures overshade,

I sing the wedding strain,
(With robin, vole and wren),
In a green bank where summer joys are made.

Full princely is their bliss—
Were they not made for this,
Who lack all retinue and need no train?

Their citadel of grasses
Empire and realm surpasses
Of gale's high palaces in vain displayed.

It is their meek estate
Near the kind earth to mate,
Their beauty hid, their weakness undismayed.

Let no rude owl espy
(Thus delicate, mouse-high)
The chamber where their lichened bed is laid!

J. E. D.

My dear friend Jack, my charming Jill,
About to venture up your hill,
Much joy attend your wedded state
And clear avoidance of the fate
Of Jack and Jill of older years,
Less fortune-favoured pioneers
Whose like attempt was evil-starred
—Notorious *dégringolade*.
But let them be. They and their like
Are jarring notes for me to strike;
I would not you interpret wrong
This unexpressive nuptial song,
So good luck, Jack—and Jill, my sweet,—
And if you fall, fall on your feet,
Or rather—should you fall at all,
Far better would it be to fall
(Wilt thou not, Jill?) upon your back . . .
So good-night, Jill.
And good luck, Jack.

RONALD MASON

A Melanesian Epithalamium

Long moons ago this maid
With porpoise teeth was wooed,
And now, the bride-price paid,
Her brow and cheeks tattooed,
Her tresses limed, her body greased,
She waits her marriage feast.

Gather the ripened figs
And bray the taro root,
Despatch the fattened pigs
And sound the bamboo flute,
While turtle and opossum bones
Stew on the red-hot stones.

And as the dancers whirl,
Let no one question who
Is he that takes this girl;
His name is yet taboo,
Until the nuptial string is tied
Around the wondering bride.

LESLIE JOHNSON

An Original Epithalamium, to celebrate a Diamond Wedding in Hospital

Aunt Polly must be eighty-four,
For Uncle George is eighty-three
And twenty-one years old was he
The day they married, to be sure.

A patient (title undeserved)
I've heard his saga as I lay,
Of soldiering in another day,
And of the couple I've observed.

Their griefs are past, their pleasures few
But quite enough for gossips, dear—
Her cup of tea, his glass of beer—
Grandaeval honours greet them, too.

A little joy to simple folk
Can be as much as crowns to kings
And self-respect, the best of things,
Makes wedlock one long gentle joke.

Now, Mother, nimble still, and coy
Trips in to kiss her sleeping Boy.

R. S. JAFFRAY

Weeping, Love came to me and said,
"Once I was Lord of Earth, but now men's hearts are cold;
But power and wealth they crave—and love is dead
And the sad Earth is old. I go to dig love's grave."

"Weep no more, Love!" I said
"Be not, as you are fabled to be, blind
But look within the rind. Love is not dead;
Still, still men's hearts are warm and women's kind!
See! see where Hymen brings
These two young, lovely things!
Look, Love! look in their lambent eyes
And know, O thou faint-heart, love never dies!
Take them and lead them by the hand,
These two who shall, 'ere night, be blessed and wed;
Into your secret, magic, Cyprian land
And bring them there to bed. . . .
So shall they, in due season, bring to birth
A boy who shall restore your sovereignty on Earth!"

WILLIAM BLISS

(Celebrating the wedding of a film star)

Now, while the sun, in technicolour sky,
Makes of the beach a super-gorgeous set,
Behold the bride, in shorts and brassière, hie
Hither to where the wedding party's met.
Her motor scooter honks a glad refrain
As forth to greet her skips her eager swain.

A cutie groomed to stardom is this dame,
Endowed by art with photogenic power:
Millions in far-off worship lisp her name
And lamp her screen-size close-ups by the hour.
The very waves, with shyly muted crash,
Creep closer to indulge a film-fan pash.

Hymen, look down: their wedding contract sign:
Grant them, as pay-off, public happiness!
In letters large upon the dotted line
Inscribe colossal, nonpareil, success!
Give Him the courage high to stay the course:
Postpone, at least a year, Her third divorce.

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LABOUR Monthly, January 1946. The Communist Party Congress, by Harry Pollitt; Notes of the Month by R. P. D.; Affiliation by Ted Bramley; Why these Strikes? by Jim Gardner; Palestine by Jack Gaster; Book Reviews. From: Publishers, 134 Ballards Lane, London, N.3. Post Paid 7d.

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R.A.F. man, demob. December, requires unf. house, bungalow or flat within 25 miles London to enable resumption civilian employment. Wife and baby at present in Midlands. Careful tenants, abstainers. Grateful suggestions. Box A3152.

TWO young men want board resid., quiet. comf. private home. Two bedrooms or one double bedroom and one room as study. St. John's Wood vicinity. Write Machness, 65 Eyre Court, St. John's Wood, N.W.8.

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